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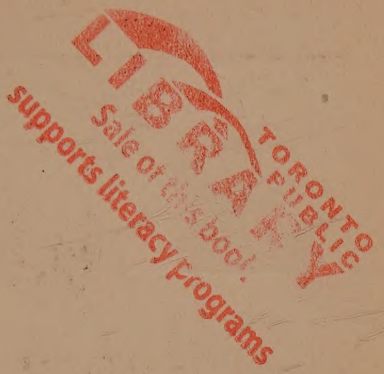

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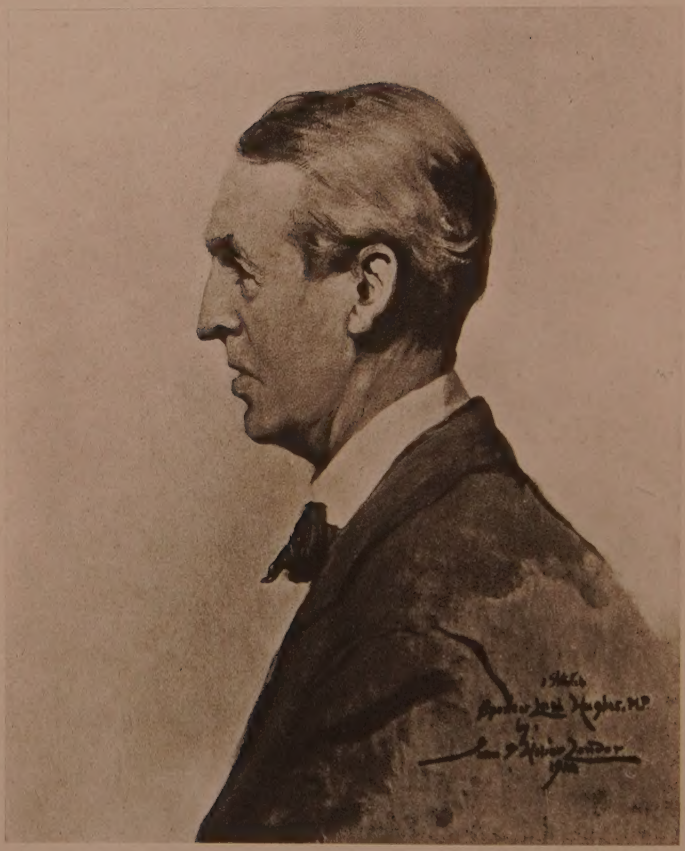

SPENCER LEIGH HUGHES

FROM A PORTRAIT BY JOHN ST. HELIER LANDER, R.O.I.

PRESS, PLATFORM AND PARLIAMENT

BY

SPENCER LEIGH HUGHES

M.P.

("SUB ROSA")

London

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TO

MY DAUGHTER

CONSTANCE LEIGH RICE-OXLEY

PREFACE

A PREFACE often contains but little other than insincere apologies and futile excuses by an author for having written a book which need not have been written at all. Instead of attempting anything of this sort, let me submit two passages from the writing of men who have established their claim to attention, and who say what I mean. The first passage is taken from Abraham Cowley: "It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself; it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise for him. There is no danger from me of offending him in this kind; neither my mind, nor my body, nor my fortune allow me any materials for that vanity."

The author of the second passage is Robert Louis Stevenson: "We are in such haste to be doing, to be writing, to be gathering gear, to make our voices audible a moment in the derisive silence of eternity, that we forget that

one thing of which these are but the parts—namely, to live. After all, it is not they who carry flags, but they who look upon it from a private chamber, who have the fun of the procession."

I have nothing to add, as is sometimes said by great men in the House of Commons.

SPENCER LEIGH HUGHES.

LONDON, S.W. 1,
1*st September* 1918.

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PRESS, PLATFORM AND PARLIAMENT

CHAPTER I

FIRST YEARS

THERE are some who in looking back through their lives, and in putting down that which they remember about men and events, feel constrained to "preserve the unities," as Mr. Curdle said. They march with the precision of the Prussian goose-step from beginning to end. I have but little sympathy with such rigid regularity, and in what I have to say in these pages I may be discursive and wandering. At the same time it is well to begin somewhere near the beginning, and so I may put on record the fact that I entered this world on 21st April 1858 in the old town of Trowbridge—at that time, and possibly to-day, noted for producing two respectable commodities, sound beer and good broadcloth. I cannot claim to know much about Trowbridge, as before I was one year old I was taken to a very different part of the country, to Newcastle-on-Tyne, where I remained for three years, and

learned two of the most important things any one can learn, how to walk and how to talk.

Many years later, when addressing a meeting of Wiltshire men, I explained that when I left my native county it was a fact that I was absolutely speechless and I could not stand, but I was careful to add that this was the result only of extreme youth. I have no recollection of Trowbridge, and naturally could not have, in those early days, but I discovered on a visit more than thirty years later that the house in which I was born had become a Conservative Club. And it happened that fifty years and more after I was taken from Trowbridge I had to deliver a speech or a lecture at Greenwich, and was told by a Wesleyan minister that a good old woman there, too feeble to leave her house, would much like to see me, as she had been my nurse in the first few months of my life. I called on her and found a delightful old lady with snow-white hair leaning back in an easy-chair. She looked me up and down with keen interest, and then said, " So you are little Spence. The last time I saw you, you were wrapped up in a bundle of shawls, and I put you in your mother's arms to go all the way to Newcastle."

I cannot remember my mother—the harsh atmosphere of the north killed her, and all too soon she was laid to rest in Elswick cemetery,

but I have heard enthusiastic tributes paid to her by those who knew her, as one who was remarkably beautiful and brilliantly witty, though her flashes of wit never gave pain to any one. She was English, from Dorsetshire, and my father was a Welshman from the old town of Carmarthen, a town said to have received its name from the British prophet and magician, Merlin. As my father was a Wesleyan minister he moved from place to place every three years, and so in my earlier years I knew, as I have said, Newcastle-on-Tyne, though I can barely remember my first experiences there, also Bramley close to Leeds, Apperley Bridge in the same neighbourhood, Darlington, Rochdale, York, Leeds and Wakefield. Thus though born in Wiltshire all my early life and training were associated with the north of England. And it was in Yorkshire, at Woodhouse Grove School, between Leeds and Bradford, that I had such schooling as I managed to get. I was only seven years of age when I went there, and left when fourteen. I have heard many a debate in the House of Commons as to the desirability of letting boys (and girls too) continue their schooldays until they are eighteen. My own experiences make me agree with that policy, because I know that until the last six months of my time I regarded all the masters as my enemies, and did my utmost to avoid learning

anything. It was just before I had to leave that it suddenly occurred to me that there might be something in education after all, but it was then too late to make up for lost and wasted time. This accounts for the fact that I never had the priceless advantage of a University training—a fact I have never ceased to deplore. But Woodhouse Grove School gave a good, sound, old-fashioned education. We were grounded in Latin and Greek, mathematics (which I loathed and still loathe), history and geography, but we heard very little about modern languages, and virtually nothing about science. Moreover, we were cut off almost entirely from the world, and when I left I remember that in thinking over what I ought to be or to do, all I could recall was that there were three or four trades, such as grocery and drapery, butchers' shops, bootmaking, and so on.

As I write this the country is under a system of food-rationing, and I look back with interest to those schooldays, remembering the plain and simple fare on which we were reared. We had three meals a day—breakfast, midday dinner, and supper at six o'clock. At the first and last meal we had dry bread to eat and milk to drink, and nothing else. But the bread was of the best, baked specially on the premises and unlimited in quantity, while the milk was pure and supplied from cows kept by the school. The result was

that we were a very healthy community. It is said in *Oliver Twist* that there are only two sorts of boys—mealy boys and beef-faced boys. I saw scores of mealy boys, pasty-faced mothers' pets, come to my old school, and within six months they were beef-faced young ruffians fighting each other in a very satisfactory manner. We were all the sons of Wesleyan ministers, but we were often told by our headmaster, Dr. Raby, in his addresses to the whole school, that so far as intelligence and conduct were concerned, we were far below the level of "the sons of common mechanics." I may say that to-day no man who wants to get on in public life would use the phrase "common mechanics," but it is a curious fact that though we all came from Nonconformist homes, nearly all the boys were confirmed Tories. That may be explained by the fact that we knew nothing whatever about politics beyond hearing vaguely that two men, Gladstone and Disraeli, were eternally contending. During my seven years I never took a prize of any sort. It would be impossible to imagine a less distingushed scholastic career. My failure was made the more marked by the fact that I had an elder brother there, about a year and a half older than myself, who took all sorts of prizes, a scholarship, and later on a University degree. He died nearly forty years ago. Thus when a few years ago the

school authorities asked me to go down to address the boys and to distribute the prizes, I felt sure they must have been thinking of my brother, and I wrote making a suggestion to that effect. The answer was that they had made no mistake, and that my school career was clearly remembered. As I had narrowly escaped being expelled, this was somewhat embarrassing, but I went, and had a tremendous reception. This can be explained quite easily. First of all, schoolboys make a splendid audience, as they feel that applauding a speaker is in some way breaking loose from restraint, and they cheer almost anything most lustily. And then I, as a politician, perhaps recognised that the majority of boys would not be prize-winners, and also that it is well when you can to get on good terms with the majority, so I explained candidly that I had been a boy there for seven years, and until that day I had not so much as touched a prize in the school. The undistinguished but honest majority burst into almost rapturous applause. Then I reminded, or perhaps informed, them that all philosophers agreed that happiness consists not in realisation or fruition, but in the pursuit of something good or supposed to be good. The result in my case had been that I was one of the happiest boys in the school, for I was always pursuing, and never once had I been disillusioned by success. What the

prize-winners thought of all this I am unable to say, but I obtained the approval of the crowd.

I have already alluded to the fact that in my schooldays the headmaster used to deliver improving harangues, "monitory and minatory," as Bacon puts it, to the assembled youngsters. Many and many a time I have heard him say that "the other day" he had seen such an one who had been a boy in his Greek Testament class, and had neglected his opportunities, who was when last met with "attempting to sell shoelaces in the streets of Bradford." I was told by boys older than myself that this tale had been told long before I came to the school. I know it was told at regular intervals during my seven years there, and I have heard that it was repeated many a time after I had left. It would appear therefore either that the phrase "the other day" was used in a very broad sense, or that there was a procession of boys who having neglected their opportunities, passed off regularly to attempt to sell shoelaces in the streets of Bradford.

As I look back on those days about fifty years ago, I remember how the news of the great Franco-German war reached us even in that sequestered community, and many of us set to work with coloured chalks to draw pictures of bursting shells, of *franc-tireurs*, of Uhlans and so forth, and I am proud also to remember that

we were to a boy enthusiastically on the side of France.

I have confessed quite openly that I never even approached anything like success in scholarship during my seven years, but I did achieve a certain sort of fame that would have been frowned on by the authorities had it been known to them. For I was regarded by those of my schoolfellows whose opinion on the point was of any value, as one of the greatest experts in the art of " sneaking out of bounds," that is, getting away from the school premises undiscovered. It was a great triumph furtively to visit the village of Apperley Bridge, and to make one's way to the river Aire, then so black that men were said to fill small bottles from its inky flood and to write letters with the stuff. In reviewing the history of my school career, what I regard as my chief triumph was the day when by thus sneaking out of bounds I managed to get to the school farm and there released the pigs from their sties, and drove them into the playground. No one other than myself and the pigs has ever known until this day who did that deed—an act approaching sacrilege.

The seven years ended at last, and I remember how as a lad of fourteen I took a last look round the old schoolroom, the dining-hall in which I had been privileged to blow the organ at prayer-time (my first acquaintance with the power of

the windbag), and the chapel. Then I passed into the outside world, not badly educated in some respects, but about as ignorant of that world, and as ill-equipped to take part in its struggles, as any lad who ever faced it.

CHAPTER II

EARLY LIFE IN IPSWICH

MY first experiences of practical life, that is to say of earning my living, were obtained when as a youth I entered the offices and the works of a famous firm then known as Ransomes, Sims & Head, the Ipswich engineers. I have always been thankful that I put in more than ten years with that firm, as I there learned in addition to other things the value and helpfulness of punctuality. For many years I never arrived at my post too soon or too late, so that I came to be known as "Greenwich time Hughes"; and to this day I detest people who, having made an appointment, come jauntily sauntering in about half an hour late. It was in those early days in Ipswich that I began to take some interest in politics, and achieved a sort of a reputation as a wag at the local Reform Club. Moreover, the head of the Ransome firm, the late Mr. Robert Charles Ransome, the most prominent man in the town and a Liberal leader, suggested that I might make speeches during elections in the

town. I believe his notion was that I might be useful in saying things about prominent men on the other side which others would not care to say, and which he, a man of great personal dignity, would not dream of saying. In those days Ipswich returned two members to Parliament, Mr. Henry Wyndham West, more or less a Whig, and Recorder of Manchester, and Mr. Jesse Collings, at that time regarded as a terrible Radical; and it was mainly in support of Mr. Collings that I made my first platform efforts.

I have admitted that my speeches were not altogether free from personal allusions in regard to gentlemen on the other side, but while I may have need for repentance in this respect it is certain that our friends the enemy assailed Mr. Jesse Collings with much greater ferocity. Some of the things said about that quite inoffensive gentleman were really blood-curdling. Indeed, political controversy was real and was earnest in Ipswich at that time. The association of both Mr. West and Mr. Collings with the town ended rather ignominiously, as they were unseated on petition. I was an anxious onlooker when that petition was tried, and I still look back on it with interest, because it was on that occasion that I first saw and heard Mr. Asquith. He was then a junior counsel, wearing a stuff gown, and was led in the case by the late Mr. Samuel Danks Waddy. The leader on the

other side was Mr. Henry Matthews, who later on became Home Secretary, and was afterwards promoted to the peerage with the title of Lord Llandaff. His junior was Mr. Coward, known because of his remarkable height as "the biggest Coward at the Bar." Well do I remember the pang of apprehension I experienced when as the Court adjourned one day I heard Mr. Coward say with cheery confidence to Mr. Asquith, "If we don't unseat your men I'll eat my wig." It was well for Mr. Asquith that he was too cautious to give a similar undertaking, for unseated they were. But, of course, my side had its triumphs as well as its reverses, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself in taking part in attacking, I am afraid in reviling, and eventually in defeating, Sir William Charley, at that time common Serjeant of the City, who contested Ipswich. His friends could not say more for him than that he was worthy and well-meaning, and his methods of electioneering as well as his emotional temperament—on one occasion he wept in public—made him an easy mark for ridicule. Sir William contested Ipswich twice, was twice defeated, and I really believe that ridicule had more to do with his defeats than had anything else. He was virtually laughed out of the town.

It was in connection with these contests that I had my first association with journalism

—and I may say that I began at the top, for I started off as a newspaper proprietor. There were seven of us, all really amateurs, and we established the *Ipswich Advance*, a halfpenny fortnightly paper which lived up to its name, as some of the articles were decidedy advanced in tone. The first number appeared on 3rd July 1885, and we then explained (unlike most papers) that we had not come to stay, as we had resolved to carry on only to the General Election, which was then not far off. We fulfilled our mission, and what seems more amazing to me now than it appeared at the time, the paper actually paid its way. A number of gentlemen had agreed to meet any loss that might be incurred, but the seven amateurs were allowed to conduct the paper in their own way. As all the editorial work was done at the Reform Club, we had no rent to pay; and nothing was paid for contributions, so that I may be said to have begun not only as a proprietor but also as a blackleg. When the General Election was over and our side had won, we called together those who had guaranteed us against loss, having beforehand conveyed a hint to one of them, who was a nervous man, that a very heavy deficit had been incurred. This gentleman imagined he was a financial expert, and in his speeches in the town he, as a rule, expressed considerable contempt for the

Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day, whoever he might be. Before our statement was made, this particular supporter, who was armed with a bundle of manuscript that would have been formidable even on the Treasury Bench, put some questions as to our legal position. He declared that he had often disapproved of the manner in which the paper was conducted, but that we had paid no attention to his protests —and that was quite true. Indeed, we had treated them and him with cheery contempt. What the legal position of the gentleman was I cannot say, but I imagine that neither he nor any of the others could have been sued for money, as no written agreement had been drawn up. We allowed him to go on haranguing us for some time, and we listened with great gravity as he proved that our methods were all along obviously leading to grave loss. At last he ceased, and it was then explained that we had ended up with a small balance in our favour, that a contribution had been given to the Club in return for gas, that each of the seven had had a complete file of the paper bound in leather with his name on it in gilt lettering (I still have mine), and that the rest of the balance had been expended on a remarkably good dinner at which we toasted ourselves and each other. When the critical gentleman found that he had nothing to grumble about, he was more indignant

than ever; and I have often observed since then, that nothing upsets a man more than to deprive him of a grievance.

As I have shown, my first journalistic experiences led up to a good dinner, and they also left me suffering from the itch for writing. I had secretly enjoyed seeing myself in print, so that when the paper ceased I missed that pleasure. The result was that I began sending articles with more or less regularity to the *Suffolk Chronicle*, a paper that appeared every Saturday, price twopence, while every regular subscriber had a small supplement on a Tuesday, gratis. It was in that journal that I first wrote an article under the heading "Sub Rosa," a phrase that I revived some years later and which became fairly well known. The reason why I gave that heading to that first article was this—there had been a secret meeting of Liberal Unionists, at that time a newly-formed body. One who had been present told me about the proceedings, which had included some amusing squabbles. Perhaps I ought not to have used information so obtained, but I did, and the phrase "Sub Rosa" was employed to mark the supposed privacy of the gathering. As time went on these occasional articles in the *Suffolk Chronicle* were noticed by Mr. (now Sir) Frederick Wilson, the proprietor of the *East Anglian Daily Times*, who was then also

a director of the *London Star* in Stonecutter Street. It was he who suggested that I should come to London and enter the risky but attractive world of Fleet Street. How this was eventually done will be explained later on.

My ten years and more in Ipswich were pleasant enough though uneventful. So far as I was concerned the placid course of life was chiefly disturbed by the visits from time to time of political leaders. It was our custom at the Reform Club to induce some statesman at the head of our party to become President of the Club for a year, and to visit us and make a speech during that year. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was the first, or one of the first, of the series, and I believe we managed to stalk and capture that notable man through the good offices of Mr. Jesse Collings. When Mr. Chamberlain reached the town he was very unwell, and his face was so swollen that he had to call in a doctor to lance him. The doctor was a sound Tory, and I remember that some of the younger Tories expressed the pious wish that the medical gentleman would cut the statesman's throat as part of the operation. Mr. Chamberlain showed great courage in addressing a big meeting when in obvious pain, and his speech was one of the most advanced during his unauthorised programme campaign. Another of our distinguished Presidents was Lord Rosebery. His

speech was a remarkable specimen of brilliant oratory, but the chief impression he left on my mind was that he appeared to be one of those fortunate men who fare sumptuously every day —and I candidly confess that I envied him. A third President was Mr. John Morley as he then was, and his visit interested me more than that of any other. I knew some of his essays almost off by heart, and I then thought, as I still think, that he is unsurpassed as a master of English prose. It was on my suggestion that he was invited to become President for the year, and when his name was first submitted to the Committee one member, who had made a great deal of money and who was remarkably shrewd, but not well informed in all respects, said hesitatingly, "Morley? John Morley? Is he a man of means?" I have sometimes felt tempted to tell that eminent man how his name was received and how his merits were critically weighed before the distinction of being allowed to become President of the Ipswich Reform Club was conferred on him.

Two things connected with the meeting he addressed I have never forgotten. In the first place, he was replying to some remarks of Mr. Chamberlain, for this was after the 1886 split, and it seems that Mr. Chamberlain had been using some incidents from the French Revolution in order to point a moral against the

Liberals. Now it very likely seemed to John Morley presumptuous for any one to talk about the French Revolution, and I have always regarded the beginning of his answer to Mr. Chamberlain as a good specimen of his style. In an icy manner he remarked, "I don't know as much about the French Revolution as I would like to know, but I know enough to tell Mr. Chamberlain——" and then he provided the needed information. It was a pleasant hint that Mr. Chamberlain had been getting out of his depth. The other incident in some way associated with that meeting was the fact that the speech, a very notable one, received hardly any report in the London papers. That was accounted for by the coincidence that while John Morley was speaking in Ipswich, another John, generally known as Jack the Ripper, was perpetrating two murders in London, and the less worthy John received by far the better press notice. I remember, too, that a Tory friend, who mingled geniality and rabidness, told me that it was lucky Mr. Morley could prove he was in Ipswich that night, as otherwise he would have been suspected of the East End atrocities.

In Ipswich I made many friendships, some of which have been ended by death, and others, I rejoice to know, still endure. A few days before this was written my very old friend, Sir

Daniel Ford Goddard, told me in the House of Commons that people in the old town, in which he has played so conspicuous a part for many years, still remember me. That might perhaps be said of a man who has left many unpaid creditors in a town, but Sir Daniel made it clear that I am remembered in a favourable and friendly way. During my life there I learned many things, two of which have been very helpful to me in later and public life. At Ransomes' Works I saw a great deal of workmen and their ways, both skilled mechanics and others, and as a result I have been able to avoid errors of judgment into which abler men than myself have fallen. And, again, I used to ride one of what are now called the old-fashioned bicycles, the high machines then regarded as modern triumphs of mechanism, and in this way I made my way to many a village green, meeting with and haranguing Suffolk agricultural labourers. And I soon discovered that they were shrewd men of sound natural judgment, and that many were studious readers of books and had well-stored minds.

It was in Ipswich that I married. I have resolved to say nothing, or next to nothing, about my wife, because those who knew her will need no description, and indeed any written tribute will to them appear inadequate, and those who did not know her would never be

made to understand what she was, even though a much more powerful pen than mine undertook to describe her. All I need say here is that winning her and losing her are, and will always remain, the two outstanding events of my life, entirely overshadowing everything else.

CHAPTER III

THE STORY OF "SUB ROSA"

MY London life began at the end of 1891, when, as I have already explained, on the suggestion and at the invitation of Sir Frederick Wilson I joined the *Star*, and not long afterwards helped to some extent in the production of the *Morning Leader*. I have a very distinct recollection of Sir Frederick asking me, when boating one day near Windsor, what I thought of the chances of a halfpenny morning paper in London. So far as London was concerned there was then no halfpenny morning paper. My answer, given with all the confidence of ignorance, was that the experiment must certainly fail, for no one would choose a paper at a halfpenny rather than a penny paper, as the difference in price was so trifling. So much for the fallibility of human judgment. And here it may be explained that when I had the assurance to try my fortune in London journalism I knew very little about the business. It is true, as already explained, that I had written occasional articles in a country

paper,—and had doubtless thought sufficiently well of them,—but I knew not a sign of shorthand (and that is still true), nor had I any knowledge of what is done in the "case-room" or the "machine-room" in a newspaper office. In spite of this I had the great good fortune to be given a ticket for the Press Gallery in the House of Commons almost at once, and to be put on the Lobby List a little later. In this way began a journalistic association with the daily life of Parliament which lasted nearly eighteen years, when it was superseded by membership. During the first ten years I never missed a Parliamentary day, being present on every occasion on which the House sat—though, of course, I was not always there during the whole of the sitting. Little is known by the outside public, or even by most of the members of the House, about the inside life of the Press Gallery. Five-and-twenty years ago it was rather a select club, and possibly it still is. With hardly an exception the men there were all most ready to help each other; the talk was bright, especially when it turned on the merits or demerits of members on the floor, as to which great plainness of speech was used. When I joined there were some fine old veterans who had been there for forty years. One of them was known to have reported Palmerston, and there were dark hints that he remembered

Pitt and Fox, even as Frank Lockwood used to say of Serjeant Hemphill, "No one knows just how old he is, but we do know that he sat in Grattan's Parliament." As a beginner I naturally wanted to make it appear that I knew all about it, and so I said to the veteran that members who made long speeches were great nuisances. The experienced man regarded me with a look of serene detachment and remarked, placidly enough and without any sign of resentment, "My dear fellow, what does it matter to us up here whether the speeches are long or short? If one fool is not up another will be." This is a profound truth—or perhaps I should say an interesting way of viewing the question—over which I have often since pondered.

As time went on I began to take part in the corporate life of the Gallery, becoming in due course Secretary of the Gallery Committee and Chairman of the Lobby Committee, positions unknown to the outside world, but regarded in those spheres as easily equal to the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lest I should be suspected of vanity, it may be well to add that when I had been Secretary for one year I was "hurled from office"—that was the phrase used—for gross incompetence, and for addressing my colleagues in a style not considered sufficiently polite even by those who were not

unduly touchy in regard to language. Some of the Committee men insisted in carrying on discussions in phraseology that would be regarded as excessively official even on the Treasury Bench. For instance, one of my colleagues would always refer to the Committee of the previous year as "the late administration," and persisted when writing out a record of a meeting in the Minute Book in using the phrase "of the clock" when noting the time of the meeting. One or two others were more remarkable for their epigrams, of which the following may serve as a sample. A well-known member of a newspaper reporting staff was taking his ease, and a little refreshment, when some one hurried in to remind him that he was overdue in the Gallery to relieve a colleague. He drained his glass, put it down, and remarked thoughtfully, "Ah, well, work is the curse of the drinking classes."

So much for the world in which I took my place as the representative of the *Morning Leader*—now for a few words about that paper itself, especially in its earlier years. I doubt if there was any newspaper office, either in London or out of it, in which the men worked under happier conditions. Most of them were young, and so long as they did good work they were allowed to do it to a great extent in their own way, for there was a welcome absence of stiff-

ness and rigidity about the methods of the place. The man who had most to do with the direction and conduct of the paper was Mr. Ernest Parke, who has been my constant friend for years. I cannot say if he has any enemy, but if he has it must be the other man's fault. In those days he was a miracle of energy—he suggested the leading article, he ordered "specials," he controlled the news, he mused over proffered verse (his own taste, and quite sound taste, too, is for anything like the verse of Bret Harte), and indeed he inspired everything that was written in the paper, besides rejecting much that was intended for it. In addition to this he watched the coal supply; if a slate was loose on the roof he flew to the rescue, and either had some one in to repair the trouble or, better still, repaired it himself. There were some of us who said, and believed, that he not only mended but also cleaned the windows. Ernest Parke has a head that is not only well stored within, but plentifully covered on the outside, having a fine crop of luxuriant and curly auburn hair. Some years ago he visited America, and there were those on rival papers who wanted to find out the reason for his trip, so they questioned me. It would have been very dishonourable on my part to have revealed the object of his trip, and as it happened it was impossible, for I had no notion why he had gone.

But after pledging my questioner never to let it be known that I had told him the hideous secret, I said that the fact was Ernest Parke had gone to America to get his hair cut, an operation that could be done satisfactorily only in a sprawling continent. This was accepted as quite a reasonable explanation. Another man who had much to do with the *Morning Leader* throughout the greater part of its career, was Mr. James Stuart, generally known as Professor Stuart. I found in him another sound friend, and few men have been more misjudged by those who may have thought they knew him, but did not know him in fact. He was entirely free from the taint of cant, and his appreciation and enjoyment of true, delicate humour were unbounded. To establish that point it is enough to say that he revelled in the writings of Charles Lamb. As a rule, newspaper proprietors are not coy in regard to any contributions of their own which they may want to put in their own papers, nor is there any reason why they should be coy. But the really apologetic manner in which Professor Stuart used to suggest that something from his pen might perhaps find a corner in his own paper, was enough to unman the most hardened editor, especially as it was notorious that much of the matter contributed by others was in flat contradiction to Mr. Stuart's own views.

Another friendship which I then formed—

a friendship which I feel it a privilege as well as a pleasure to retain—was with Gordon Hewart, now Sir Gordon, a law officer of the Crown who has already climbed high, and is obviously destined to go much higher. He came straight from Oxford triumphs to Stonecutter Street, and we saw much of each other, living in the same suburb and the same road, and for years travelling home together by the last train. I never knew a man more deadly in argument. He was obviously at that time predestined for success, and great success, at the Bar. I believe he could have knocked out John Stuart Mill in a bout on logic. Yet there was not then, and there is not now, nor will there ever be, anything of the dry-as-dust lawyer about him, nor will all the further success which his many friends hope and feel sure he will achieve in anyway cloud the sunny geniality of his temperament. There were many other men associated in those days either with the *Morning Leader* or the *Star*, or with both,—men who have done and are doing well, such as Thomas Marlowe, editor of the *Daily Mail*, Lincoln Springfield, Charles Hands (to whom reference is made in another chapter), and Evans who edits the *Evening News*.

It was early in the history of the *Leader* that one night, in a haphazard way, I produced a column about things in general, and headed it

with the words "Sub Rosa," and a column so headed appeared thereafter daily for twenty-three years, always written by myself, except during holiday intervals. For a little time there was no evidence that any one noticed it, and I remember feeling almost excited when one day a couple of postcards reached me commenting on something I had written. In the course of time heaps of letters, papers, pamphlets, and so on began and continued to arrive daily from all parts of the world. There was one correspondent who wrote steadily at fairly regular intervals from Hankow, away on the Yang-tse-Kiang in far-off China. And the articles themselves were written in all sorts of places and in all sorts of circumstances. Scores, nay hundreds, were written in express trains, and in this way I came to be quite an authority on the comparative merits of the rolling-stock and track of the different railway lines in this country and in others.

I wrote one of these contributions from the top of the Eiffel Tower, others from cafés or public gardens in Brussels, Cologne, Vienna, Nuremburg, Carlsbad, Liége, Namur, Dinant and many other places in Europe, as well as in Jerusalem, Damascus, Jaffa and Beyrout, in a more distant land. But most of them were written either at my home in London or in some Press Gallery room in the Commons, and towards

the end of the series in the Library of that House. More than one was written amid the solemnities of the House of Lords, as I listened to their lordships—and commented in writing on what I heard. On one occasion I called at the office of the *Western Mail* in Cardiff and blandly explained to the editor, an old friend, that I wanted a quiet room, pen, ink, paper, and a topic for a "Sub Rosa" article. His was a Conservative paper, but he at once provided all I sought, the topic being something his paper had published that morning which lent itself to ridicule. Thus I made fun (by invitation) of those who were treating me well, and who added to their attentions by providing from a neighbouring club a good beef-steak with the usual trimmings, of which I think tenderly in these lean and rationed days. Great is the catholicity of the Press, a truth I can establish by another illustration. There was a night when the electric power failed for a considerable time in our office, and so "copy" was sent out to be "set" at other offices, for most papers are willing to help each other in such a dilemma. As it chanced, my "Sub Rosa" manuscript was sent to the *Daily Telegraph* for treatment, and when it came back duly and punctually set, even I, for once, felt rather ashamed of myself, for the unhappy article was based on something that had appeared in the lordly *Daily Telegraph*, and

my comments were consistently impudent from beginning to end.

One day Professor Stuart told me that among my daily readers I could number Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and later this was repeated to me by that fine specimen of a sound-hearted gentleman himself. He added that his attention was first called to the column by Lady Campbell-Bannerman, who directed him never to miss it. I hope I am not revealing a State secret when I mention a fact told me by a Cabinet Minister, that Sir Henry had quoted with approval from "Sub Rosa" at a Cabinet Council.

I have already alluded to the huge heaps of letters that used to reach me, and in thinking them over I am amazed to remember how few were of an unfriendly nature, for I doubtless earned such attentions very often. One letter which reached me before the series had lasted long, pleased and impressed me much, as it came from a lady who said she read the column every day to her children, and told me she had soon discovered that she need not glance through it first to see of it contained anything not fit for children to hear.

Before the end the articles numbered thousands, and had contained just about ten million words; and looking back on them all, I am profoundly thankful to be able to say that

I was never once involved in a libel action. I would not make that indiscreet boast if the series were still going on, for that is the sort of pride that generally goes before a fall. And it may be that I was often very near a fall—at any rate more than one eminent lawyer has since told me that some of my productions had been submitted in order to see whether an action could not be founded on them. I cannot say whether I ought to be proud or ashamed of the fact that men learned in the law declared that I seemed to have an almost uncanny facility in dodging along the narrow boundary to overstep which lands one in the pitfalls of libel. The last of the series appeared on 30th November 1915, and the fact that it was the last was the outcome of circumstances over which I had no control. The *Morning Leader* as a separate paper had ceased, and had been merged and lost in another. The proprietors of the other suppressed the feature, as they had the power and the right to do—indeed in such cases might and right are as closely associated as they are in Prussian policy. I hope I am now too old to be conceited, but I was touched by the many hundreds of letters, every one of them friendly, which reached me at that time. And though I have alluded in another publication to one incident in connection with the suppression of the column, I hope I may be

forgiven for repeating it here. A lady who described herself as "an elderly woman" wrote telling me that she had had "a good cry" on learning that these articles had ceased. She also said, "I always read them to my eldest son, who is now at the front." On reading that I mused and wondered what the boy had thought of me, and whether he had welcomed even the trials of war as providing an escape from those daily articles. Seven days later a letter came from the son, dated 7th December 1915, and headed France, and in it I read: "While the second battle of Ypres was being fought I lay under the gable of a barn and read 'Sub Rosa' with the German 18-pounders whizzing over our heads, endeavouring at the time to compose what I am pleased to call my mind." My gallant friend and faithful reader was indeed in an awkward position, and it is not clear whether he was more bewildered and unsettled by the article or by the attentions of the enemy. He was at any rate true to his country's cause and to his mother's training, and stuck to his post and to the article. I still get letters expressing regret that "Sub Rosa" no longer appears—only the day on which this is written three such letters reached me, though the series came to an end more than two and a half years ago. And I still meet people who express similar views in conversation, being good enough to say

that they miss it. It is pleasant to know that the column is missed by so many friends, but this I can say with all sincerity—no one can miss reading it so much as I miss writing it. Johnson has said that we never do anything consciously for the last time—of things, that is, which we have long been in the habit of doing—without sadness of heart. That was my feeling when the suppression came, and is still my feeling when I remember how it came.

CHAPTER IV

SPEECHES AND LECTURING

AT one time I was very much addicted to after-dinner speaking—an art that has been unkindly described by Lord Rosebery as consisting in one man who does not want to say anything addressing others who do not want to hear him. After-dinner speaking is commonly denounced as boring, and is said to be less enjoyable than the after-dinner music with which it is interspersed. The fact is the two arts are not always placed in fair competition. When a dinner is arranged in aid of, say, a hospital or some other charitable institution, gentlemen are often called on to speak not because they have any gift in that direction, but because they have subscribed handsomely to the cause. But the man who is invited to sing or to play the fiddle is selected because he is known to do these things well, and in order to judge fairly between music and speaking I think the fiddle-playing should be left to those who have handed in the largest cheques. In the happy pre-war days one of

the most interesting dinners of the year was that given by the Press Gallery, when any member or ex-member of that Gallery could attend and could bring a guest. The Gallery always managed to secure a chief guest of real distinction—such men as Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, Viscount Grey or Mr. Birrell. On one occasion I was deputed to write to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman asking him to be the guest at the next dinner, which was then about ten months off. In his reply, without either definitely accepting the invitation or declining it, he suggested that it should be repeated later on, " for," he added, " who knows where we shall be by that time ? " I cannot say if he felt any presentiment, but before the date of the dinner he was dead, and thus the Gallery was deprived of the pleasure of entertaining that most genial of public men.

It fell to my lot to propose the health of some of the great men I have mentioned—notably the healths of Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Birrell. The occasion I remember best was that on which we entertained Mr. Balfour at the Waldorf Hotel, and though at such gatherings politics were rigidly excluded, Mr. Balfour did incidentally make a political pronouncement of great importance, as I will proceed to explain. To begin with, I had alluded to our guest as one who notoriously never read

the newspapers. I know that Mr. Balfour declares that he is unconscious of ever having made any remark to that effect, but it is attributed to him, and it will "cling to him everlastingly," as Coleridge grimly said that fire would cling to Pitt. Having quoted that supposed remark of Mr. Balfour's I proceeded to inform him that though he might not know it, his name was often mentioned in the papers —almost every day something or other was said about him. There were those who praised him, saying that his character and his career were the pride of every true Briton and the envy of surrounding nations. Again there were some who stooped to the low practice of saying that which was evil concerning him; and here there were some of my friends who rudely interrupted, suggesting that I had done this thing. Ignoring these attentions, I added that there were other devoted men who turned their attention to the far more arduous task of trying to explain Mr. Balfour's views on this or that question of the day. His speech in reply was, as I thought and still think, perfect. Dealing with the points I have mentioned he said, "Like other politicians, I have those who criticise my views, those who applaud them, those who understand them, and those who explain them. I have no quarrel with any of those various classes of commentators, except

perhaps the last. I am sure I am always more or less happy when I am being praised, and not very uncomfortable when I am being abused, but I have moments of uneasiness when I am being explained." It should be remembered that this was said at the time when Mr. Balfour's speeches on the fiscal question were of such a nature that both sections of his followers, Protectionists and Free Traders, used to hail each speech as showing that he was definitely on their side.

And now for the important political pronouncement. I had described Mr. Balfour as the raw material of the journalistic trade or calling, valuable raw material which we tried to work up into the finished article, and in noticing that he said whatever our fiscal views may be, none of us desires to put a tax on raw material. I was rather elated on having elicited from this distinguished man about his only really definite remark on the fiscal question, other than his memorable and momentous utterance at Sheffield that " Tariff Reform may be right, or it may be wrong." He made another remark at that dinner on 10th April 1908 that may be of use to the watchful reporter, for he said, " I give public notice that if any speech of mine appears with Latin quotations, those quotations are due to the reporter and are not due to me."

It was at the same dinner that a letter from Lord Rosebery was read containing what I think is one of the most just appreciations of the reporters' arduous task that was ever written. This is what Lord Rosebery wrote: "My indebtedness to the Press Gallery is very great. I do not, indeed, in these days tax them heavily, but in former years I fear I have afflicted them sore, and I never view them at their labours without a feeling of the most profound compassion. For on the rare occasions when they are reporting a very good speech they are not able to enjoy it, and on the innumerable occasions when they are reporting a very bad one they must undergo a torture too great for words, besides remorse for waste of time, and a consciousness that they are reluctantly preserving that which on every ground ought to perish instantaneously."

In addition to becoming addicted to after-dinner speaking I have also put in a considerable amount of political "oratory," if I may use a much over-worked word. This was particularly the case in the General Election of 1906, when it was a fairly easy business for one with my views to engage in an offensive against the other side. When a man is a candidate for a constituency he has to be more or less careful as to what he says and as to what he promises to do, as I have since found. But when a man

goes all over the country without any sense of responsibility, and with one pet speech, he can easily outshine the local man on the occasion of a single visit; and in 1906 I was not seeking a seat, and so, if I may use a colloquial phrase, I "had the time of my life." I well remember a trip at that time which I made to the Hawick district to help Mr. Thomas Shaw, as he was then known—now Lord Shaw of Dunfermline. It was dark when I arrived at Galashiels, and I was hurried to a meeting and told to speak at once and to keep on until a watchful agent tugged at my coat, when I was to stop within two minutes. Then I was to be driven to the station and taken on to Selkirk for another meeting. At each gathering I found a boisterous and friendly audience, who sang with rapture a ditty ending with the cheery refrain, "We'll all work and vote for Tommy Shaw," and I may say that the word "Shaw" lends itself well to vocal effort. By the time I was there the General Election had gone far enough to make it quite clear what was going to happen, and the constituents in the Hawick district did not want to hear any more politics. They certainly heard none from me, but I set to work to tell them every tale I could remember about the supposed dullness of the Scot, and about his imagined meanness. When such tales are told in a manner showing that they are not in-

tended to be taken seriously there is no audience on earth more gloriously ready to rise to the occasion than one of Scotsmen, and I had quite a tempestuous reception at both meetings. I was still on the platform at Selkirk at ten o'clock at night, and I gave in my vote in Dulwich, south-east London, just before nine o'clock the next morning, having reached St. Pancras in a sleeping-car about an hour earlier. The vote given was quite futile, and I may say that I have never voted for a man who won in a Parliamentary election since 1885, when I polled for Messrs. West and Collings in Ipswich—and, as I have explained, they were later on unseated.

Another occasion during the 1906 election that I remember well was a certain Saturday night I spent with Sir Weetman Pearson (now Lord Cowdray) at Colchester. That Saturday was virtually the first day of polling in that General Election. I use the word "virtually" because Ipswich had led off on the previous day and thus got ahead of all the other constituencies in the kingdom. There were grave pundits who said that the action of Ipswich was out of order, was unconstitutional, was *ultra vires*, and so on and so forth. Indeed these wise men were all agreed that the election would be held to be null and void, and must be fought over again. The wise men were quite wrong, thus illustrating the truth of John Bright's sound

remark when he said bluntly, "The worst about great thinkers is that they think wrong." The two victors and pioneers at Ipswich, Sir Daniel Goddard and Mr. Felix Cobbold, came over to Colchester the next night to celebrate their victory by helping Sir Weetman, and the meeting went with a swing. Then some of us sat up to await the news from Manchester, where, I think, there were then seven seats that had been all held by Conservatives—"but when the sun set, where were they?" The news of one victory after another came in steadily until at last, as a final climax, it was reported that even Mr. Balfour had been defeated. One remembers the time and place where such news is first heard, and I think I never experienced a more dramatic series of reports from the front, at any rate, in the sphere of political warfare. That, as I have said, was on a Saturday night, and on Monday I was in Manchester where what may be called the swell after the storm had not gone down. The Reform Club there was still seething and all sorts of other surprising results were coming in—notably that proud Preston had returned two Liberals. It was while I was in Manchester that I met a lady of foreign origin with her Lancashire husband. She told me that in her native land she had always been taught that Englishmen were singularly unemotional and were incapable of

excitement. Thus she had been surprised and considerably puzzled when, on the famous Saturday night, she had seen a prominent citizen of Manchester, usually a man of very decorous behaviour, put his silk hat on the floor in the Reform Club and then jump on it. She asked why this was done, and I explained that the sacrifice of a silk hat was in this country an indication of supreme satisfaction—a solemnity reserved for great occasions.

In a few more days that historic General Election was over, and what gave me the greatest pleasure was the knowledge that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who had been unworthily ridiculed by his opponents, and not always heartily supported by some of his friends, had come into his own at last, and had left the other side with their trumpets silenced and their plumes laid low. There were some good friends who arranged a public dinner to me shortly after, at the Trocadero, in recognition of what they were good enough to describe as my services, and Lord Loreburn, then the Lord Chancellor, took the chair. One of the chief speakers was Mr. Thomas Shaw for whom I had spoken, as I have said, at Galashiels and Selkirk. He gave a playfully extravagant description of the sensation my visit was supposed to have caused, one of his remarks being that all the women down there were asking in regard to

myself, " Is he married ? " and all the men were saying, " When will he come again ? " I have never been able to make up my mind as to the true significance of the men's question, as they might have been anxious to prepare a reception not altogether friendly.

In a previous chapter I mentioned the fact that much of my writing had been done in railway trains, and the chief reason for this was that I used to go on lecturing tours all over the country, in England, Scotland, very often in Wales, and more than once in Ireland. I quite enjoy lecturing, and whatever audiences may have thought of my efforts, I know I have found audiences more interesting than they can have found what I had to say. Many lecturers tell tales about trying experiences with chairmen who have insisted on making long speeches of introduction, sometimes taking the subject on which the lecturer is going to speak for their own harangues. I have had no such troubles, and I dislike the modern custom of having no chairman. In some places the lecturer now has to walk in, to begin at once, and when he has finished to make the best bow he can and walk off again—there not being so much as a chair on the platform. This is rather too abrupt for comfort. Only once did I have a prolix chairman, and though he had much to say he did not trench on my topic—moreover, he had some

excuse for his prolixity. He was a prominent town councillor in the place, and at the time of my visit there was a stern controversy going on as to a proposed drainage scheme. My chairman had been attacked a day or two before, and he took the opportunity of replying and of carrying war into the other camp. The effect was almost startling, for while some cheered him, the people of that other camp were much roused, and a large part of the audience objected to hearing anything one way or the other about drainage, so that when I began to talk on quite another topic I could see that for the first twenty minutes or so many of the folk were still agitated about the drains—indeed they were exchanging remarks about them and about each other. It is a little embarrassing, too, when a chairman introduces you as one whose name is very well known to everybody (a very familiar form of introduction), and then has to stop and to peer carefully through his glasses at the programme to find what your name is. And a sensitive beginner may have been caused to wince when a chairman puts it in this way: "Mr. Hughes will now give us his address on life in Parliament—but I may say, before he begins, that next week we shall have a really splendid lecture from——" and then comes the name of some one else. One soon becomes accustomed, however, to these little attentions, which, indeed, add to the joy of

a lecturer's life—and my general feeling towards those who have been staunch enough to preside when I have been lecturing is a feeling of gratitude.

One should remember, too, that these gentlemen have sometimes much to endure. When I made my first effort as a Parliamentary candidate in the Jarrow Division, an open-air meeting on my behalf was begun about three in the afternoon. There was a big four-wheeled cart and a form across it for the speakers, and on that form, in the middle, sat the chairman, a man of weight in more than one sense. I had to go from place to place, and was at this particular meeting for about only half an hour, soon after five o'clock. But I was told later that our side heard that the Tariff Reformers were anxious to use our "pitch" when we had finished, and so it was resolved to speak on and on, Mr. Vivian, then the member for Birkenhead, making a superbly prolonged effort. He was succeeded by man after man until, though it was a gloriously fine July evening, darkness was setting in, just as a very vigorous man known for his staying power was about to begin. It was then that the chairman cried out in anguish, "For Heaven's sake shut up—I've been sitting on this hard form since three o'clock and my bones ache." It was enough to make one think of that other region mentioned in the hymn, "where congregations ne'er break up."

CHAPTER V

MY FIRST CONTEST

MOST men who stand for Parliament, and who sooner or later get in, have cherished the ambition for a long time before their first attempt. That was not so in my case. I had become quite intimately acquainted with the inside of Parliamentary life as an onlooker, being for years in the House as a spectator, but I had never thought seriously, or indeed thought at all, of being a member. It is true that sometimes when watching and listening to a debate I had wished that at the moment I was a member, and could have had the opportunity of pulverising some public man or some party, but this was a mere day-dream. Then it happened that on one memorable afternoon in the year 1907 as I was sitting, a martyr to duty, in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons a letter reached me intimating that before long there would be a vacancy in the representation of the Jarrow Division of Durham. The Liberals in that constituency

wanted to know if I would stand if I were invited, and I assented, on the understanding that nothing was said about the matter until the invitation had been formally given and accepted.

Now it happened that at that time I was a friend of Mr. (now Sir) Patrick Rose-Innes, K.C.—as I still am—and I knew that he had stood more than once for Parliament as a Conservative, and unsuccessfully. Here, I thought, was a chance for him to have another try, and so I had a hint conveyed to him (but not as coming from me) that he should approach his party organisers and tell them that if by any chance a vacancy occurred at Jarrow he was ready to fight as Conservative candidate, and this was done. When I next met him he told me as a profound secret about this possible vacancy and his position in regard to it.

I pretended to be very ignorant about the whole affair, and entirely uninterested in it. Indeed, I remarked casually : " But I thought you had resolved not to try again in Scotland." He remarked : " Well, Jarrow is not in Scotland," adding some phrase expressing pity for my ignorance ; so I asked meekly enough, " Then where is Jarrow ? " and he told me.

We met two or three times before my candidature was announced, and I listened with some friendly interest, tempered by affected unconcern, to his reports as to how things were

going on. Then at last the secret could be no longer concealed, and my learned friend assailed me with good-natured reproaches, and we agreed to do our best against each other.

To some the contest seemed likely to be a safe and sure thing for me, for the constituency had always been a Liberal seat, sometimes uncontested, and at other times showing a very handsome majority for the Liberal. I remember the genial remark of Sir Henry Lucy just before I started—"I really think that even you could not lose Jarrow!"—but even that did not make me feel at all confident. For I knew that the man who had so triumphantly held Jarrow for many years was Sir Charles Palmer—the man who had made the place, and easily the most prominent personage in the district.

Again, when I started off it was known that the contest would be a three-cornered one, and no one knows what will happen in such a fight. Before the trouble had lasted many days the "combat deepened," and it became a four-cornered affair, there being a Liberal, a Tory, a Labour, and an Irish Nationalist candidate, each at it as hard as he could. And as if this were not enough, we soon had Mr. Hunnable hanging on the flank, claiming to be a fifth candidate, and I am bound to say that whenever he set up his pitch near any of the four official candidates at an open-air meeting

the crowd deserted us and romped away to hear and to heckle him.

The questions put to that gentleman were sometimes blunt to the verge of brutality, and one question of that sort gave him the opportunity for quite a triumphant reply. The question was, "Ain't you a lunatic?" His answer, given with considerable dignity of bearing, was this: "There are five candidates before this constituency"—he counted himself as one—"and I am the only one of the five who can produce a certificate of sanity." And that was true enough.

Thus it was a very complicated struggle, and it proved to be a very long one. Indeed it lasted five weeks, there being one week's interval in the middle for the celebration of the Northumberland Plate week, or the Pitman's Derby, during which it would have been idle to expect any one to be interested in politics.

I remember that one of the features of the fight was the eloquence of Tariff Reform speakers about "ruined industries" in that part of the country. I was asked "what had become of the glass bottle-making trade?" and "what about the chemical industry?" and so forth. A party of distinguished journalists was taken down the Tyne by steamer and entertained somewhere down the river—at Tynemouth, I think—to a remarkably good luncheon by some

of the "ruined" gentlemen. As the visitors went down the river and as they came back again nearly every slag heap was pointed to as the melancholy remains of some industry that had once been the centre of roaring trade, paying handsome wages to a happy and contented population.

It is said that the journalistic experts saw twice as many ruined industries when coming back as when going down the Tyne!

The leading speakers of the four parties were turned on all over the constituency, and there was enough oratory to satisfy any reasonable man. I am bound to say that the gentlemen of the Irish Party eclipsed all the others, easily and completely, so far as eloquence was concerned. But at last the storm and struggle were over, for even a Jarrow election, with the Pitman's Derby in the middle, does end sooner or later.

There is a certain comfort in being quite sure you are beaten before the counting takes place, and so far as that was concerned I knew some days before the end that I could not win. But I wanted to be second out of the four—and hoped and tried to believe that it would be so. Indeed I looked forward to having a friendly grin at the expense of Pat Rose-Innes, but this perhaps unworthy ambition was not realised.

The "count" took a long time, and of

course no communication from within the building was supposed to take place with the outside world until the result was officially declared; but long before that I noticed that an energetic journalist from London, representing one of the big agencies, happened to have four pocket-handkerchiefs on him, each of a different colour from the others. I was seated in a quiet corner, and was passing the time by writing an article for a newspaper. There was a window near, and the journalist from London went to the window, close up to it, and deliberately wiped his face with one of these coloured handkerchiefs.

Of course I knew what he was up to, so I said: "Well, you've let your friend outside know something; you might tell me, too." He said: "I've let my man know that Labour's at the top, and it will be on the tapes in London in five minutes."

That did not surprise me at all, and I went on writing.

The gentleman of the Press found occasion to wipe his face near that window again a little later. "What does that mean?" I asked, a little more anxiously, and he replied, "The Tory's licked you—you'll be number three." I must have shown disappointment and perhaps dismay, for the experienced journalist said pleasantly: "I've seen one or two chaps hanged,

and they looked very much as you look, old man." I thanked him for his soothing assurances, and a few minutes later the official announcement confirmed these preliminary "tips."

It served me right, perhaps, for having secretly lured my good friend Pat Rose-Innes into the business in order to beat him and chaff him—and now he had beaten me! I am bound to say that he made no unkind use of his advantage.

I suppose most beaten candidates would like to be left alone just after a fight, but sturdy friends will not allow that. The victim is required during the contest to keep on saying "We are winning," when he knows he is not; he has to smile all day until his face aches with smiling, and then when he has been defeated he has to vow that they have won a great moral victory, that a time will come—and so on and so forth. I remember with some satisfaction that what I said was that if my party got a better candidate they would win the seat back—and this has been done. But I was driven from centre to centre in the constituency, stared at by all, cheered by many, alas! hooted by some, and greeted with uproarious welcome by all the children, who hailed the other three candidates with equal friendliness.

The last scene of all came next day in Newcastle-on-Tyne Station. The Flying Scotsman

for the South was at the long curving platform. It was a long train, and I had my head out of a carriage window at one end, and was addressing a gathering of faithful friends, predicting a glorious triumph at no distant date for that cause than which, I ventured to say—and so on. I heard a distant cheer, and saw that at the other end of the long train my distinguished friend the Tory candidate had his head out and was no doubt telling a similar tale to his good friends. The train started—it was a corridor train, and before we had quite crossed the river I met my late opponent coming to find me even as I was looking for him.

We sat and smoked and fought the battle o'er again. It seemed a long time, though only between two and three months, since the afternoon when in the Press Gallery in the Commons I had first heard about a coming vacancy at Jarrow. It had been my first candidature, and both my friendly opponent and myself agreed that we had been defeated but not disgraced!

I ought to add that I have heard that my idea about the handkerchief signalling manœuvre during the counting has been described as "camouflage," if I may use a word which was not then in use in this country. It has been said by a gentleman who claims to have taken part in getting the news away to London before the announcement had been made in Jarrow

that though coloured handkerchiefs were possibly displayed, it was by other means that the facts of the case were communicated from the room to the outside world. Whatever were the means adopted, they were so successful that the first intimation of the result came to Jarrow in a telegram from London, much to the disgust of a large group of journalists who were waiting to send the news to London !

At this distance of time it is safe to reveal the fact that the hint given to Sir Patrick Rose-Innes about the vacancy at Jarrow was conveyed by Mr. Henry Smith (now Sir Henry), a man to whom I have been indebted for many and many a favour and kindly act. He is, I believe, in some respects so unusual as to be almost unique; for while he is one of the main directing and controlling forces of an enormous business with its headquarters in London Wall and with factories in many parts of the kingdom, he spends much, indeed I believe most, of his time in doing helpful things for others. It is not only that he gives away money freely—many rich people do that—but he gives what must be of more value to himself than cash—time and thought and effort. And he not only does not ask for publicity in regard to his good deeds, but he shrinks from and detests anything of the sort.

CHAPTER VI

SECOND AND THIRD CONTESTS

WHEN a man has stood for Parliament once, and has been beaten, he is almost certain to stand again should an opportunity present itself. As already explained, I had never even thought about being a candidate before it was suggested that I should contest Jarrow, but that taste of blood had aroused appetite, and my second attempt, which also ended in defeat, was made in the later months of 1909 at Bermondsey, not many weeks before the first General Election of 1910, when at Stockport my third effort was successful.

The Bermondsey fight was unusually interesting for many reasons.

In the first place, it was a three-cornered fight, as a Conservative, a Liberal, and a Socialist candidate were in the field. And what made it all the harder for me was the fact that both the Conservative and the Socialist were well-known local men who had for a long time taken a prominent part in the public life of Bermondsey.

The Conservative was Mr. John Dumphreys,

and some idea of the free-and-easy popularity he enjoyed may be gathered from the fact that his friends covered the walls with posters declaring "Jack's the Boy!" Elections are influenced in different ways, and I was assured that Mr. Dumphreys' whiskers recommended him strongly to many in the constituency—and I am sure those whiskers were of great assistance to the cartoonists of the day.

But taking Mr. Dumphreys apart from his whiskers, if such a divorce could be imagined, he had been the hero of a very unusual feat in British politics, for he had actually stood against Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in Birmingham itself. That fact alone crowned him with a halo of romance. And what is more, when he attacked Mr. Chamberlain's seat, Mr. Dumphreys went there to preach Tariff Reform (then called, I think, Fair Trade)—a doctrine that Mr. Chamberlain at that time treated with considerable contempt. But long before the Bermondsey election of 1909, Mr. Chamberlain had joined the Dumphreys school of economic thought, with the result that Mr. Dumphreys quite fairly claimed that he had converted the notable statesman.

Thus Mr. Dumphreys with his long local record, and with the fame attaching to this tremendous exploit in Birmingham, and also with his whiskers, was a formidable candidate.

And then there was the Socialist candidate, Dr. Salter, who, as I have already said, was well known locally. In addition to this he was a man of eminence in his own profession, his medical degrees being brilliant. I was assured that he had chosen to practise in Bermondsey, because he preferred to help the poor rather than enjoy an easier and more lucrative time in Harley Street or the neighbourhood.

And so in Dr. Salter, too, I recognised a formidable hostile force from the very start. And I was told early in the contest that he had received more than 4000 definite, trustworthy, personal promises to vote for him. Of course I knew that if he polled that number I had no chance, but I was encouraged by remembering that "definite, trustworthy, personal promises" do not necessarily mean much at election times, whether they are made by voters or by candidates.

As things turned out, about one-third of these promises "materialised," as electioneering jargon has it.

I have shown elsewhere that in that first contest of mine at Jarrow an additional element of interest was provided by the fact that Mr. Hunnable made his first appearance as an independent candidate. Independent candidates have become more common since. But at Bermondsey a far more mysterious personage

was introduced, though he could not be said to have actually appeared on the scene. I allude to "Alf Smith" of Leicester.

I ought to explain that the three main topics talked about at this election were the Budget of 1909, the House of Lords, and what was known as "dumping." As Bermondsey is, and has been for many a year, noted for its tanneries, eloquent orators declaimed with passion against "these shores being polluted with alien hides." In other words, they wanted a tax on foreign leather, though when the same speakers were questioned on that topic in the shoemaking districts they told a different tale. In those other places the tale was that leather is a raw material, and as for taxing raw material these gentlemen adopted the attitude of Mrs. Cluppins in Bardell *v.* Pickwick, who, when asked if she had listened to a conversation between those two, replied majestically, "Beggin' your pardon, I would scorn the haction."

It was in the midst of the Bermondsey fight that a letter appeared in the papers signed Alf Smith, and giving the number in the street in Leicester in which he was supposed to live. He had nothing to say about leather, but claimed to be an honest working British carpenter who had been ruined because foreign doors and window-frames were dumped upon our shores. All the poor fellow's work had gone, and his

wife and children had been compelled to retire to the workhouse. So Alf Smith called upon the electors of Bermondsey to avenge his wrongs by voting against me.

Inquiries were made in Leicester, and no such man had been heard of at the address given. Again the local authorities had no knowledge of any Mrs. Alf Smith and little ones having entered the workhouse, or having been helped by poor-law funds. The mystery deepened, and an arduous hunt was undertaken all over the country in order to trace or track down the elusive Alf Smith, the much-tried carpenter, but he was never found.

Soon we began to regard him as Betsey Prig regarded Mrs. Harris, and decided that there was "no sich a person." And from that day to this he has never intervened in any other contest.

I am proud to know that my candidature had something to do with the solitary appearance, if it may be called an appearance, of this notable nonentity.

Most of the London papers decided early in the contest that the Conservative would get in, that the Socialist would be easily second, and that I would be a very bad third. Indeed, these papers pleased themselves and their readers by printing day after day that "Mr. Hughes also ran."

Well, at length the time to test these prophecies arrived.

I remember the count very well. The authorities there did not so rigidly exclude all strangers as is the custom at some other places, and there was quite a considerable gathering of onlookers, though they were kept away from the tables of the official counters. Even when the count was beginning one of Dr. Salter's friends assured me that there could be no doubt whatever that his man had received not less than the promised 4000 votes.

In the end the numbers were: Dumphreys, 4278; Hughes, 3291; Salter, 1435, so I could hardly be said to be the " also ran " one of the starters. Mr. Dumphreys, who had been magnificently friendly during the contest, shook my hand warmly and generously declared that I had put up a great fight. I complimented him, but he may well have forgotten my little tribute when he received shortly after a telegram from the late Duke of Abercorn saying, " I believe you have saved the country. Splendid! " Any man may well feel proud when one of the highest order of the peerage sends such a message.

Mr. Dumphreys took his seat, but before the end of the year Parliament was dissolved, and in the General Election of January 1910 the fortunes of war went against him. So he had not a very long opportunity of going on

ELECTIONEERING UNDER DIFFICULTIES—MR. HUNNABLE AT JARROW.

saving the country and pleasing the Duke of Abercorn. But he was in the House long enough to do one good thing—for he entertained me at dinner there.

Thus I can claim to be the man who dined with Dumphreys, and he is the man who was said by a duke to have saved the country.

My first and second elections were alike in more than one feature. They were both complicated, I was on each occasion rejected, and in each case I lost a seat previously held by my party. And what I cannot deny is the fact that each of those seats was won back to that party by another candidate at the following election. I fear it would be easy for any one to argue with some show of reason that I must have been rather a poor candidate. It may be that I had learnt by experience and had consequently improved, as within a few weeks of my defeat at Bermondsey I made my third effort, standing for Stockport in January 1910, and this time—the third time of asking—I was successful. One incident in that contest I am not likely to forget. On the day of the poll I was driving from one polling-room to another, and when I had stepped from the carriage at one place a big buxom factory girl flung her arms round me, kissed me soundly, and then exclaimed to the delighted crowd, "Eh! I've kissed t' member." As the voting was still going on I was not in reality the

member, but I regarded the incident not only as pleasing in itself but also as a good omen. As I write this I am still one of the members for Stockport, having been returned a second time in December 1910. Let me add that, having enjoyed this experience for eight years, I can claim to know Stockport people well, and have found out what sound-hearted friends they are. I say this alike of political supporters and opponents. Since I was elected I have experienced two of the heaviest blows of fate that can overtake a man—the loss, first, of an only son, and then the loss of my wife. On each occasion I received messages of the warmest and truest sympathy from Liberals, Conservatives and Labour people in Stockport. Again, during those eight years there was an occasion of domestic rejoicing, when my daughter was married, and the same good friends, irrespective of party, showed that while they can weep with them that weep, they can also rejoice with them that do rejoice.

CHAPTER VII

ELECTORS AND ELECTED

IT was during the second General Election of the year 1910 that I made the acquaintance of Mr. Neil Primrose, as he was then known, who was contesting the Wisbech Division against Lord Robert Cecil. I was asked to go to Wisbech and to speak there, and after I had agreed, messages reached me from the place to the effect that the other side had resolved that I should not be given a hearing. It seems that something I had written during a previous contest there was supposed to have led to the defeat of their candidate, quite a flattering tribute from my point of view. There were some on our side who advised me not to come, but I knew that however small my influence would be in helping the cause by going, I should certainly injure the cause very much if, after being announced beforehand, and after threats, I were to stay away. So I went, and I have not forgotten the precautions taken to get me to the meeting safely. A local gentleman took me down certain little by-streets,

through two houses, in at the front and out at the back (and in one case we climbed over a wall), so as to avoid any lurking foe. It struck me as we went along that I had seldom been in a quieter place, and the hall was reached not only in safety, but with what looked like studied indifference on the part of the people. The hall, however, was well filled, and as Neil Primrose was to come on later from another meeting, I was put up first. Naturally I expected some interruption, but the only attentions of that sort were friendly cheers, so that when I sat down I said to some one on the platform that I had been told there would be a row. He explained that it was all right in there, for as every one knew every one else in Wisbech, all those who were likely to cause trouble had been thrown out before the meeting began. I suggested that they might be waiting outside, and my friend said he would be very much surprised if they were not. During the meeting Mr. Primrose arrived and told me that half a brick had been flung through the glass screen of his motor-car, but no further harm had been done. At the end of the meeting he waited for a time chatting with constituents, and they gradually went away, so that when Mr. Primrose and I went out we were alone, or almost alone, and had to walk some little distance to our hotel. The gentlemen who had been removed from the

meeting —" flung out " was the phrase, I think —were there with large reinforcements, and they made a swoop at us, yelling ferociously at the same time. That yell was a tactical error on their part, for it brought a body of about a dozen sturdy policemen running from a neighbouring street, and they formed a bodyguard. They hit out vigorously, and we all marched swaying along. A quantity of mud that was no doubt meant for me plastered Neil Primrose, and once or twice youths clutched hold of our coats, but were chased off by the police. I remember that as we passed the statue which Wisbech has put up to her eminent son, Thomas Clarkson, Neil Primrose—who was remarkably cheerful, and seemed to enjoy the adventure—said to me, " I wish Dalmeny was here; he may not be much of a politician, but he *can* fight." We reached the hotel without any harm having been done. No doubt our friends the enemy had enjoyed hooting, shoving and flinging mud, and as later on our side won the election, I suppose every one may be said to have been pleased.

It was in those circumstances that I got to know Neil Primrose, a man of rare personal magnetism and charm. Some who did not know him well thought that he viewed politics as a game to be regarded with indifference, but that was not so. He could and did stick to his views, and quite independent views they were,

as tenaciously and stubbornly as he stood by his country in the stress of war. He had everything to live for—he was young, popular, rich, gifted, and quite certain of a brilliant career. Moreover, he could have avoided active service without any loss of honour, but he insisted on going and he fell in action. Having mentioned him I may say a few words about his inseparable companion, Mr. Agar-Robartes, commonly know as "Tommy," to whom I was introduced by Mr. Primrose. To say that the two were the best dressed men in the House of Commons would be inadequate; they were probably, nay, they must have been, the best dressed men in the world. When it was proposed to alter the King's accession oath or declaration so as to soothe the susceptibilities of the Roman Catholics, these two young and notable politicians started off on a tour of meetings of protest, and made speeches that would have pleased John Foxe who wrote the *Book of Martyrs*. I remember that when Mr. Agar-Robartes was home on leave from France, I had a talk with him about his experiences, and he declared that there was very little danger where he was, but he was extremely anxious about Neil Primrose, then in Gallipoli. As things turned out, however, Tommy Agar-Robartes fell in action, or died of wounds directly after the action, some time before his friend met his death.

Another young and distinguished member of the House who was killed even earlier than either of those two, was Mr. W. G. C. Gladstone, nearly always called " young Gladstone." Here again was a man with every right to look forward to fame, and to what he would have preferred to fame, the chance of doing public service. And he also was one of those who easily and without discredit of any sort could have avoided military service—but he went and fell. Soon after he came into the House I happened to be sitting near him in the Library where he was writing. He suddenly flung his arm on the table, laid his forehead on his arm and groaned aloud. I was startled, and asked if he was ill. He said he was quite well, but he was utterly sick of writing letters in answer to letters which came from all sorts of people away from his constituency, people who had no claim on him at all. When I suggested that one of the finest institutions supported by voluntary contributions is the waste-paper basket, he explained that when a man takes part in public life the public have a right to his attention; and many a time I have seen him pegging away at letters, and have heard him groaning over them. In one respect young Gladstone used to puzzle me, for he very often asked me how to spell really simple words; and I have never been able to decide whether he really needed the information,

or whether these inquiries were instances of that form of humour which consists in "pulling one's leg," as the phrase goes. I have all my life had a great reverence for a University training—sometimes I have thought my reverence may have been excessive—and here was a man who had been President of the Union at Oxford asking for information as to quite elementary spelling. But I have been assured by University men that there is nothing surprising in this.

That reminds me of an incident in which I took part in a newspaper office many years ago. There was a young Oxford man on the staff who tried his hand at dramatic criticism. Whether his views on plays and so forth were sound or not I cannot say, but I know that what he wrote was expressed in extremely ungrammatical language, and sometimes after he had gone home I used to alter his language without changing his meaning. He was one of those very rare people who can see that an alteration in what they have written may be an improvement, and on one occasion when he had thanked me for what I had done he remarked quite simply, "You see they don't teach composition at Oxford." And so it may be that they do not teach spelling either.

As I have been thinking about my acquaintance with the younger Gladstone, and musing

over what he might have done had his life been prolonged for forty years or so, my mind has almost unconsciously turned to the older Gladstone and what I remember of him. It would be quite out of place, and indeed grotesque, to attempt any estimate of his character and career in a book of this sort. Already the books written about him would form a small library, though it is only twenty years since he died. All I propose to do is to mention some of the occasions when I saw and heard him, and I have a distinct recollection of the first time I caught sight of him. He was riding in an open carriage through the streets of Norwich, enjoying a popular triumph, such as is given to some great conqueror, and later on in the same day I heard him address a huge meeting. Let me confess that when he rose I feared I should be disappointed, for he looked so very aged and feeble. The fact that when he began his speech he was leaning heavily on a stick added to the suggestion of decrepitude. He had been speaking slowly and gravely for about five minutes when there was some little disturbance owing, I believe, to overpressure in the crowd. Mr. Gladstone appeared to think that it was a hostile demonstration, and the effect on him was magical. The weight of five-and-twenty years seemed to slip from his shoulders, he quickly handed his stick to Mrs. Gladstone

(who was watching him carefully and was evidently quite accustomed to this sort of thing), he spoke with animation and with resonant voice not entirely free from Lancashire pronunciation, while his bold, unstudied, but always appropriate gestures were those of the natural orator. Hostility, real or imagined, always roused him to his best, and it often occurred to me that of all his gifts or endowments—learning, eloquence, mental alertness, physical fitness, vast experience—his greatest asset as a public man was courage. His Norwich visit took place before my London life began, and I had no knowledge that I should ever see him again. It fell to my lot, however, to see and hear him scores and scores of times, generally in the House of Commons, where at the age of eighty-three he was Leader of the House, head of the Government, and was fighting his second Home Rule Bill through, confronting all sorts of difficulty with dauntless resolution.

Having described how and where I first saw Mr. Gladstone, let me now mention where and when I saw him for the last time. It was on 1st March 1894 when he made his last speech in the House of Commons, and I was one of the very few men present who knew at the time that it was his last. There was nothing in the speech to suggest that it was a farewell utterance, indeed a little later the Lobby was full

of men saying it was a fighting speech, and that evidently he meant to go on leading them. It happened, however, that as I went into the House that day, Professor Stuart, who had come from Downing Street, advised me to watch and listen to Gladstone with particular care that day, as he would never again be seen or heard in the House of Commons. Of course I took that advice and heard his animated declaration that the question that had been raised as to the comparative authority of the Lords and Commons "must go forward to an issue." I watched him walk out that day—passing from a scene in which he had played a part for more than sixty years, a conspicuous part for fifty years, and in which he had been easily supreme for a quarter of a century. His last speech was made sixty-one years and two weeks after his first, which was delivered in those old buildings that were burned down in 1834, and which seem so far removed from us as to belong to mediæval history. In that opening speech the youthful, almost boyish, Tory had indulged in sarcasms at the expense of the great Reform Bill of 1832, which had just become an Act. In his last, as the veteran Liberal leader, he stood up, as I have recalled, to the House of Lords. I have often thought of that last speech, and what still strikes me as the feature most worthy of note about it was

the quiet manner in which Mr. Gladstone ignored, nay concealed, the fact that it was the last. What an opportunity he had for self-display, for an emotional and sensational farewell. As the years go on, and as the self-advertisement of public men becomes more and more blatant, the quiet dignity of that exit appeals to me increasingly.

That was on 1st March 1894, and a little more than four years later, on 28th May 1898, I witnessed his funeral in Westminster Abbey, where it has been said that those who have shaken the world with their controversies may be found resting side by side. I have kept no notes as to what I saw on that occasion, but I have a distinct recollection of much that I felt. Some of the music, notably that of the boys' voices, was overpowering in its appeal, especially as they sang, "His body is buried in peace, but his name liveth for evermore." And one thing that I saw I shall never forget—it was the group standing or kneeling round the open grave. At the head of the grave sat Mrs. Gladstone in a carved chair, venerable and motionless, while close to her was one who was then known as "little Dorothy Drew," who had been the delight of her grandfather in his later years. Other grandchildren knelt there, too, and behind them stood a group of notable men. There was the Prince of Wales,

afterwards Edward VII.; the Duke of York, now King George V.; Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, Lord Rosebery, Sir William Harcourt, John Morley, and some others whose names my memory does not retain. Big Ben, I remember, boomed out just as the body was being lowered; and then the Prince, with that perfect tact which is inspired by fine feeling, raised one of Mrs. Gladstone's hands and kissed it as if she had been of royal rank, after which Lord Rosebery kissed her on the forehead. I saw a tear roll down the face of the great Lord Salisbury as he looked down on the kneeling grandchildren—and then we all came out again into the commonplace world.

Two years later I was in the Abbey again when the famous grave was opened to receive the coffin containing Mrs. Gladstone. It was a simpler ceremony, but it was also a deeply emotional scene. The two had come together again in the grave—it was known that Mr. Gladstone had before his death stipulated that, if he was buried there, she must rest in the same place. And Mrs. Gladstone's funeral was made all the more touching by the fact that very large numbers of women, evidently quite poor, and even shabby, had journeyed to the great shrine to mourn, and mourn truly, over the grave of one who had helped and encouraged many of them.

CHAPTER VIII

"LABBY" AND THE LOBBY

THERE are incidents in Parliamentary life, and especially in the life in the Lobby, that should never be revealed, while, of course, there are others that may be, and should be, published at once. In addition to these, there are matters about which nothing should be said at the time, but which can be quite fairly mentioned after the lapse of a few years. What I am about to relate belongs to that class, and I may add that I obtained from Mr. Labouchere some little time before his death full permission, most readily given, to publish his letters, and to tell the tale in which he figures prominently. In the year 1905 I was busily engaged in the Lobby of the House of Commons when many active members of the Liberal Party were doing their utmost to carry divisions against the Tory Party, in order to trip up and turn out the Government, and I was admitted to the confidences of these gentlemen. Political purists on the other side may say that these gentlemen were trying to engineer

"snaps," and perhaps they were—indeed I know they were. And so, in order to silence criticism from the other side before I relate a little experience of my own, I will remind friends on the other side of one or two things I know about their camp. For instance, I have a copy of this "Whip" sent out in 1913:

Private and confidential.—Please come 10.55, Wednesday, July 30. Come straight to the Terrace without going upstairs. It is vital not to mention this to any one.—H. P. P.

And a little earlier than that, on 21st April 1913, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, a respected and deservedly popular Tory member and a Lord of the Treasury, addressing a Primrose League meeting, said in a frank manner that did him credit:

The first time they made a snap division to beat the Government it ended in rather a bad failure, for this reason—a number of them, of whom he was one, were hidden within reach of the House of Commons in a very dingy kind of back room, with nothing to regale themselves with but their pipes and whisky and soda, and they were left there for two or three hours and forgotten, and when the division came no one came to tell them.

I mention these things not in order to reproach honest gentlemen for doing, or trying to do,

their duty, but in order to show that in Parliamentary warfare "snaps" must needs come—though they do not always come off.

Having thus prepared the way, let me repeat that in 1905 there were many attempts made by the Liberals to do the trick. Again and again the attempts failed, not because we hid men in dingy rooms and then forgot them, but because we had slackers in our ranks, and had no means of compulsion to get them to the front when the time for action had arrived.

At that time Mr. Labouchere was particularly busy, and no one who witnessed his zeal during 1905 ever imagined that he would decline to stand and would give up Parliamentary life in the beginning of the next year. He was good enough to talk over things with me very often, and one day he handed me the following letter, which I have kept for more than thirteen years :

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
2nd March 1905.

DEAR SIR,—We believe that it would greatly conduce to the attendance of Liberal members in the House if you were to publish daily lists of the Liberal absentees in divisions, with the hour of the division, and a statement of the number of the Liberal members that voted in the division exclusive of the Irish. We are convinced that it is almost hopeless to attempt to turn out

the Ministry unless the Liberal attendance in the House be more regular than at present. We are, too, of opinion that a Liberal would do better not to pair, should he for any cause find it impossible on any occasion to be present in the House.—Yours faithfully,

H. Labouchere, D. Lloyd George,
John E. Ellis, Reginald M'Kenna,
Winston S. Churchill.

It will be observed that there is nothing about secretly assembling on the Terrace, or hiding in a dingy room. All that was suggested was that members should be urged or influenced to do their duty regularly.

But I had no great liking for "black lists," and at first I suggested that we should publish the names of the Liberal members who did vote, and at the same time invite constituents who missed their member's name from this roll of honour to write to the gentleman for explanations. Mr. Labouchere dismissed that with the curt remark, "No good, not a bit of good."

Then I said that, of course, absentees might be privately paired; but again Labby replied that it was far better to be away unpaired than paired, for unpaired men made the other side uncertain.

My last point was that a man might be suddenly called away owing to domestic afflic-

tion, and I shall never forget Labby's contempt for this sort of thing. He made the most unfeeling remarks about mollycoddles who stayed away from the House because of a wife's headache, or because one of the brats had the pip. His contempt was evidently heartfelt and sincere. So at length I agreed to draw up a black list and publish it on the first fitting opportunity.

Just before we parted Labby said with a grin that he had found great difficulty in getting Mr. John E. Ellis to sign the letter—alluding to that excellent member as "the just man made perfect." Mr. Labouchere said that Mr. Ellis shrank from signing any communication sent to a journalist, and Labby, grinning again, told me that he had assured Mr. Ellis that he knew the Press very well, and was certain that directly I had read the letter in question I would carefully tear it up into very little bits and then burn them. So the signature was added.

As I have said, I promised to do this stern duty as soon as a fitting occasion came round, and round it came in only a day or two. I resolved to take no notice of the "dint of pity," but to publish the name of every Liberal absentee from an important division that took place, a division that might have been critical had all our men turned up.

I leave the reader to imagine my emotion when I found that one of those who had failed

to reply to the summons of the division bell was—Mr. John E. Ellis, the gentleman who had hesitated to sign the letter to me, not because he was not in sympathy with its suggestion, but because he shrank from having dealings with journalists.

What was I to do? I had promised to pillory the offenders, and it would have been obviously unjust to show favouritism. Either none of the absentees was to be shown up, or all their names, including that of the "just man made perfect," must appear. So, acting in accordance with Gilbert's dictum that "duty, duty must be done," the complete list was drawn up and published!

But I wrote a letter of sympathy to Mr. Labouchere, saying that it made my heart bleed to have to include the name of his eminent and valued friend, yet that great as had been my sufferings I felt sure that he—Labby—would be even more upset. Mr. Labouchere was evidently touched by this thoughtful attention, and he replied in the following letter:

QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS, ST. JAMES'S PARK, LONDON, S.W.,
5th March 1905.

DEAR MR. HUGHES,—I can well imagine how painful was the duty, for I myself almost wept when I found that I had had any hand

in suggesting such Roman virtue. I suppose that the explanation is that our respectable friend was at a prayer-meeting, and was one of those who think that when necessarily absent from the House it is more to the interest of the party not to pair.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

It may have been mere fancy or imagination on my part, but I had a notion that for some little time after this incident, that had been so trying to me, Mr. Ellis regarded me more coldly than usual—and I dare say he shrank more than ever from having dealings with the Press. On the other hand, I am bound to say that Labby showed almost indecent glee when we met and talked the matter over. He was great on scriptural similes, and he said something about it being as if St. Paul had been soundly rated by one of the Gentiles, and had deserved it. All I got out of the affair was the approval of my own conscience.

This shows how hard the way of the Lobbyist sometimes is—in this country, at any rate. In the United States the Lobbyist is said to be out after the dollars, and to get them. That is what is said, but it may be a slander. In this country the Lobbyist is in search of intelligence, and he does not always find it—because it is not there. And sometimes, as in the case I

have mentioned, he is urged to pillory certain gentlemen, and finds to his dismay that he has to pillory one of those who made the suggestion.

I am proud to say that I have never known a Lobbyist fail to rise to the occasion, finding pleasure in the sense of duty done, and while frowning on the sin, pitying the sinner—as Mr. Labouchere and I pitied Mr. John E. Ellis.

It will be noticed that the letter signed by Mr. Ellis and the others sternly demanding a black list of absentees is dated 2nd March 1905, and Mr. Labouchere's letter about his respectable friend is dated 5th March, and had reference, I believe, to a division on 4th March ; so that Mr. Ellis had hardly ceased to enlarge on the failings of others when he himself became a castaway.

I have said that in 1905, before I was a member of Parliament, I had no liking for what are called " black lists," though at that time I was safe from all danger of appearing on one. My only connection with such affairs then was that I drew up the list of victims, and was responsible only for seeing that it was correct. Naturally enough I think even less of such transactions now, seeing that instead of being engaged in the safe and easy task of denouncing others I myself may be denounced. But Mr. Labouchere delighted in taking part in Parliamentary tactics, and was an expert and a past

master in such forms of enterprise. There were things in which he firmly believed and which he earnestly desired to see succeed, but he regarded the greater part of Parliamentary proceedings as a game. At the same time, the game had always to be played with scrupulous attention to rule, for though he was remarkably nimble and alert in his methods he never descended to unworthy trickery. As a matter of fact, he was continually consulted by men of all parties on all sorts of subjects, some of them far removed from the arena of politics, such as domestic disputes. I have heard that more than once he was consulted by a husband and a wife as to some squabble or misunderstanding, neither of them knowing that the other had gone to him. And though his appearance in the members' smoking-room always brought a group of men round him, Mr. Labouchere has been described by some who knew him well as essentially a lonely man. In the Press part of the House there is a window through which New Palace Yard can be seen, and I often sat near that window in the evening. On scores of occasions I have seen Mr. Labouchere walking across the Yard going to his house to dinner, but I never once saw him accompanied by any one. He took a cynical delight in living in a most beautiful house under the shadow of Westminster Abbey and facing the House of Lords.

And though he may have been lonely in a general way, he knew how to entertain guests on occasion. I well remember dining in that house one night in surroundings of splendour. Several of the men were going on to Buckingham Palace and were in various gorgeous uniforms, while Mr. Labouchere wore the rather seedy smoking-jacket which all men knew. The dinner itself seemed to include, in a venerable phrase, the "best of everything." But Mr. Labouchere ate a little cold ham, munched a piece of stale bread, drank a little water, and that was all.

CHAPTER IX

CARPET-BAGGERS AND CRANKS

WHENEVER it is proposed to alter the electoral system in any way, there are always some members of the House who want to leave things as they are. In his *Literary Studies*, Walter Bagehot described Lord Eldon as "one who believed in the danger of Parliamentary Reform, the danger of Catholic Emancipation, the danger of altering the Court of Chancery, the danger of altering the Courts of Law, the danger of making landlords pay their debts, the danger of making anything more, the danger of making anything less." There are still people who shrink from change as readily as Eldon, or perhaps I should say, who oppose it as sturdily,—for it is not easy to imagine Eldon shrinking from anything,—and one of the reasons they always give for objecting to change in the electoral law is that it would result in increasing the number of carpet-baggers and cranks in the House. The phrase carpet-bagger means, I suppose, a man who was not born in the place for which he stands, or

who does not live there; and that being so, I should say that there is always a majority of carpet-baggers in the House. And I have never been able to see what reason a man has for exceptional pride when returned for his native place, as it may very well be that he is returned, not because of real merit, but because his demerits are overlooked owing to the accident of his birthplace. Nay, I have been told of cases in which a local man has been returned on the ground that if he is sent up to Parliament, his neighbours will get rid of him for some months in the year.

As to cranks or faddists, as they are called, many have been thoughtlessly labelled in this way merely because they were ahead of their time, and were earnest advocates of causes for which most men were not prepared, for the fads of one generation often become the commonplaces of the next. When the Summer Time proposal, then known as Daylight Saving, was first submitted to the House, it was derided almost universally. The wits and the wags, alike in the House and the Press, enjoyed themselves immensely at the expense of a few thoughtful men who patiently tried to explain that proposal, and who were dismissed as freaks, oddities, faddists and cranks. At present, however, there are only about six men in the House who are against the scheme, and they in

their turn find themselves "the cranks" of to-day. Of course, John Bright was quite right when he remarked years ago that in every Parliament he had known there were one or two gentlemen who were not quite strong, and for whom allowances ought to be made.

He was evidently alluding to cranks of the most pronounced sort, sometimes known as freaks or oddities. Such gentlemen are generally anxious to leave the world better than they found it, and they cannot be made to see that the best way of doing that would be to leave the world at once, a remark that could be, and has been, applied to some others. They are men of one idea—and that is a wrong one, as Johnson said of the "dull, tiresome fellow" he chanced to meet, and whose name has been mercifully withheld. Whatever may be the subject before the House, either during a debate or at question time, they will forcibly or slyly introduce their pet hobby, and are quite unmoved by shouts of "Order."

As a rule, there is a fellow-feeling among the cranks, though they may be interested in quite different subjects. Persecution brings them together, and so these poor faddists who are laughed at by the majority seek each other out for mutual comfort and encouragement. You will see them communing in odd corners of the Lobby, or in the passages and corridors of the

House, even as early Christians used to huddle together in holes and corners and in caves of the earth.

About some members one feels inclined to ask—what are they doing there in the House? But about these gentlemen the question is not what are they doing there, but what are they doing anywhere? Why are there such people?

And yet no one should feel surprised at the presence of quaint persons in the House, seeing that a lunatic may be returned, though an idiot may not. The law says that an idiot, or natural fool, is one that hath no understanding from his nativity, and who therefore is by law presumed never likely to attain any. He is incapable of being elected a member of Parliament, as having no judgment, and therefore incapable of executing the trust. I can imagine people saying that while this may be the law, it is a law not strictly enforced, as they will declare they have known cases in which the type of man said to be excluded has been let in. The explanation possibly is that the law draws fine distinctions, and recognises the difference between an idiot who must not be admitted and a lunatic who may, for the authorities go on to say that a lunatic is one who hath had understanding, but by disease, grief or other accident hath lost the use of his reason. He is a person that hath lucid intervals, one who is sometimes of good

and sound understanding, and sometimes not. Lunatics in their lucid intervals may be elected, for their lunacy may never return, but if a person sane at the time of his election afterwards become lunatic his seat may be declared vacant if the insanity be permanent and incurable.

Here again the decision may seem harsh, but the risk is not very great as the question has to be settled by the House itself (or that used to be so), and members shrink from beginning an inquiry into the comparative sanity of each other. They naturally enough ask—who would be safe in such circumstances ?

Again, the same law applies to the voter, for an idiot or natural fool cannot vote, but the vote of a lunatic during a lucid interval is good. It is a question of fact for the presiding officer to decide whether the alleged lunatic is at the moment of voting sufficiently *compos mentis* to discriminate between the candidates, and to answer the questions, and to take the oath, if required, in an intelligible manner. If when he presents himself he is sufficiently sane to be in a position to give his vote, the presiding officer is not justified in rejecting it.

The reader will see then that one lunatic in a lucid interval may vote for another lunatic who is also enjoying a lucid interval, and so a member of Parliament may be returned. It is not surprising, therefore, that quaint and curious

persons are sometimes elected, and the House would be poorer, and certainly much less interesting, without them.

But while it is true, as I have cheerfully recognised, that the so-called crank sometimes turns out to have been in the right all along, there are still gentlemen in the House who are passionately in earnest about ludicrous and impossible causes. I can well remember a dear old gentleman belonging to the Irish Party who introduced a Bill known as the "O and Mac Bill."

He declared that Ireland was still outraged by an English law that made it illegal for any Irishman to begin his name with "O" or with "Mac." It was in vain that men told him he was surrounded by members from Ireland whose names began in this way. He discovered some book in the Library in which there was a reference to a disability of this sort existing in the days of Edmund Spenser, and he said that the offensive law had never been repealed. The prefixes of "O" and "Mac," he said, were only tolerated, and he was determined to have them enjoyed as a matter of right.

He consulted me on the point, and I might have felt flattered had I not known that he consulted every one who would listen to his complaints. I strongly advised him to go ahead with the matter, and inflamed him still further

with a sense of injustice. At last his chance came on a Wednesday, then the short day in the Parliamentary week. He had been lucky in the ballot, and the day was his—thus he determined to make a day of it, and so did the House.

Few men have been more vigorously or generally cheered than was my worthy friend when he enlarged on the grinding tyranny of the Saxon as shown by this infamous mutilation of some of the most famous Irish names. Of course, the Government of the day did not care two straws about the matter, and a junior Minister was there to put the Government's case. He began by saying that the Bill was quite unnecessary, but that neither he nor his friends would oppose it.

As the House was in a rollicking mood the junior Minister let himself go, and declared that so far as the law was concerned an Irishman could begin his name with A, E, I, O, or U if he liked ("and sometimes W and Y!" shouted out a member), or he could begin it with Mac, Mec, Mic, Moc, or—and the rest of the sentence was lost in a roar of delighted cheering.

When the Minister had finished only a few minutes were left before the hour for adjourning. His answer, though in one sense sympathetic, for he had promised not to oppose the Bill, had by no means soothed my friend. On the con-

trary, it had infuriated him, and he leapt up to have a few words in reply. He spoke from the gloom underneath one of the side galleries, leaning forward, holding on to one of the supporting pillars with one hand, while he stretched out the other and pointed with quivering finger at the Minister. My friend was a little man with a huge white beard, and as he stood there he reminded me of a picture I had seen of Moses coming down from the Mount. He declared that there was some one behind the scenes, some one plotting against him and Ireland, some one who had inspired that scornful speech. So he hotly declined to accept any favour from such a Government, and he wound up by moving to report progress !

That is to say, he killed his own Bill by depriving it of its only chance of getting through.

There was a roar of laughter that might well have cracked the glass ceiling, and for once a gentleman, who was a real crank, a crank pure and simple in every sense, had given the House a real treat. I cannot say what is the state of the law about " O " and " Mac " to-day, but I do know that, whatever it is, it is the same as it was before my amiable friend took up the question.

It should be remembered that there are many temptations placed in the way of members by those who wish them to take up fads. What's done we partly may compute, but know not

what's resisted. To my knowledge there have been persistent attempts made to induce some member to raise a debate on the Flat Earth theory. It has been pointed out that the question could be raised on the Education Vote —and I can say that I have served the cause to some extent, for though I have never consented to bring forward the question myself I have done my utmost to persuade others to do so—alas! in vain. One correspondent actually implored me to move an amendment to the Address if there was no allusion to the Flat Earth theory in the King's Speech! The Speech from the Throne had not been made public at the time, and so I replied that I could not bring myself even to imagine that so important a subject would be ignored by His Majesty's advisers.

It will be seen, therefore, that while there are cranks in the House, there are many more in the country, and so in this respect as in others the House of Commons is a representative assembly.

Let no one suppose that I pretend to have been always right in my forecasts, and that I have never described as impossibilities proposals or suggestions which have since been universally accepted not only as practical, but as useful. I can well remember a visit I received from a gentleman years ago in a newspaper office, when he assured me that flying machines heavier than air, that would travel long distances, not

only could, but very soon would be made. I listened to him politely, but I thought he was mad—indeed I felt certain he was, so that I was relieved when he went away without any display of violence. As soon as he had gone I wrote an article which gave great satisfaction to myself on cranks in general and on flying-machine cranks in particular. And what is more, I "proved" that what the gentleman had predicted as being close at hand could never take place. There were some impressive passages about the immutability of the law of gravitation, and passing allusions to the same quality that used to distinguish the laws of the Medes and Persians. It was really a strong article, for I firmly believed what I wrote, and what is more, I am certain that nine-tenths of those who read it agreed with me at that time. But the "crank" was right and I was wrong; moreover, if he thought I was a fool, as I certainly thought he was, once more he was right and I was wrong. It may be that the same could be said of some cranks and some critics to-day.

CHAPTER X

MAIDEN SPEECHES

IF any member of Parliament, even one who has been in the House thirty years and has made hundreds of speeches, were to tell me that he has no recollection of his maiden speech, I should not believe him. Other people not only may, but certainly will, forget it, but the man himself never. So while it is quite likely that no one other than myself remembers my first effort in the House, I say quite candidly that I have not forgotten it. At one time, not very long ago, it was customary for a new member to let at least one session, and often more than one, pass before he addressed the House; but I must confess that though I took my seat for the first time on 15th February 1910, when the first session of the twenty-ninth Parliament of the United Kingdom was opened, I did not keep silent beyond Thursday, 31st March. That is to say, I got up in about six weeks after my arrival. It is generally supposed that a man is sure to be very nervous at such a time, and I believe many

men, perhaps most men, are—but not all; and I was not when once on my feet. But I was restless until called on, and it is the waiting to be called, not the speaking itself, that is the real ordeal. Then I had some advantages, resulting from a knowledge of the House and its ways, gained by eighteen years' experience as an onlooker. Again, the subject under debate was "the relations between the two Houses of Parliament," and I should say that any man who had been through the January 1910 election must have learnt how to say something on that subject, one way or the other. Let me make a further remark of the nature of a confession—I deliberately waited until there was a debate that lasted two or three days, choosing the third day for my effort. That gives a man a chance of studying what other men have said, thinking it over at leisure, and then making an appearance of something like ready debating. In addition to this I took care to write out all I was going to say—though I did add, very cautiously, a few remarks based on what had been said just before I rose. Then having mastered what I had written out, I jotted down on a large envelope about ten words or phrases to act as reminders, and after that I felt secure. It happened that I did not look at the notes, and yet they answered their purpose, because the consciousness that they were there to be

referred to if necessary gave a sense of safety. Though I was not in the least nervous when I began, I distinctly remember not recognising the sound of my own voice for the first few minutes, indeed I experienced a sense of unreality at the outset, as if I was not quite sure as to where I was or what I was doing. But I pegged away, being much helped by that kindness which nearly all members show to a beginner; and what helped me chiefly was that they laughed when I said something that I intended to be amusing. A later speaker was good enough to say that they had had a "most amusing speech," and the next day I noticed with pain that the report used the phrase "a most amazing speech," which was by no means the same thing.

I have mentioned the fact that in other days, not very remote, men used to wait a year or two before speaking in the House, but, of course, even in those times there were exceptions to this general rule. Indeed, there is a record of a gentleman named Lechmere, afterwards Lord Lechmere, who was a lawyer, and therefore modest, who, having marched up to the table, taken the oath, and signed the roll, turned round, and from that convenient position immediately fired off a speech to the astounded Assembly. Sticklers for order maintained that he had no right to speak, seeing that he had not taken his seat—that is to say,

he had never, as a member, sat down in the House.

That well-known character, Orator Hunt, actually made six speeches on six different topics on the first night he was in the House. But until recent years, as I have pointed out, most men were content to be seen and not heard for quite a long time after they were returned to the House. In the present day, however, constituents expect their man to assert himself without delay. Unless he does so fairly soon, he gets kindly—or sarcastic—inquiries as to whether he is ill. I have known worthy gentlemen reduced to a pitiable condition of mental and moral pulp by being imperiously urged on by their political supporters, while also being held back by natural hesitation or timidity.

Though some men are not nervous on these occasions, as I have shown I was not, I may add that on the other hand it does not really help a new member, especially if he be a young man, to give himself " cool as a cucumber " airs. Old members welcome and expect a certain amount of diffidence and nervousness in a beginner, as a sign of respect to themselves. They look on a new member as a group of elderly matrons regard a young bride whose bashfulness recommends her.

Even in the House of Lords some such feelings are entertained.

Mr. Harry Graham tells a tale in his *Mother of Parliaments* about a young peer, who had just come of age, calmly winding up his maiden speech in the Lords by offering up a prayer that the Almighty would long spare him to assist their lordships in their deliberations, and it is said that the older peers were more amused than impressed. I cannot say what would have been their feelings if they could have seen into the future, for the author of the tale says that later on that young peer made the acquaintance of most of the divisions of the Supreme Court, from the Bankruptcy to the Divorce.

One of the most successful maiden speeches I ever heard in the Commons was delivered more than twenty years ago by the then "baby" of the House—that is, by the youngest member in it. He looked so young that it is said that ladies, looking down from their gallery, used to say it was "a shame to keep that child out of bed after eight o'clock." Some old Parliamentary hand had given him the sound advice to tell the members not only that he craved their indulgence for his first attempt at a speech in the House, but also that he was the youngest member in that Assembly. This artful opening had the desired effect—they cheered him warmly, they beamed on him with real affection, and so off he started.

He spoke for less than a quarter of an

hour, but I believe a full report would have filled columns. I doubt if ever human being managed to get out more words to the minute, and the pace increased as he went on. Nobody knew what he was talking about, and nobody cared—but everybody was delighted. Two phrases not often heard in Parliamentary oratory still linger in my memory—one was "I'll bet anything I'm right," and the other was "It's a beastly shame that it should be so, that's my opinion at any rate." And that seemed to be the opinion of all, though no one was quite sure what it was that the young beginner regarded as a beastly shame; but the phrase pleasantly suggested that the young member had but recently left school.

When he sat down he had a tempestuous ovation worthy of some statesman who had saved the Empire several times.

The effect of a successful maiden speech does not soon pass away, but stands a man in good stead for a long time. On the other hand, a failure at the start requires many later successes to induce men to forget it.

Of course, no man need despair because he has failed at first—every one has heard about the unsuccessful first efforts of Sheridan and Disraeli, and it is a fact, though not so generally known, that the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson was shouted down when he made his first attempt.

That, however, had nothing to do with any lack of merit in what he tried to say. The fact was the whole House wanted a division and their dinner, and even a pathetic plea to give a beginner a chance avails nothing in such circumstances. But while it is true that an initial failure may be followed by great success later on, no man should suppose that this later success can be ensured by a bad beginning.

I remember another maiden speech delivered in 1906 in rather trying circumstances. A young man had been really swept into the House at that remarkable election, to the great surprise of himself and of every one else. He told me that he had no notion why he had come there, and I never found any one who could enlighten him. It was soon brought home to him that he was expected by his honest supporters to address the House, and he was so badgered that he chose the worst possible occasion.

There was a full-dress debate lasting four days, and nearly every one wanted to speak, especially the mandarins of the front benches, as Mr. Labouchere used to call them. In ordinary circumstances a new member wanting to make a maiden speech can get a chance, but in that Parliament there were scores, if not hundreds, of new members, and they had to scramble with the rest.

My young friend made the grim resolve that

whenever any man sat down, it mattered not on which side, he would jump up. It was magnificent, heroic, though trying, but he went to work, and jumped and jumped for three days. He had some scientific knowledge, and he told me that by the end of the third day he had expended enough energy to raise half a ton to the top of the Clock Tower. At last on the fourth day he succeeded—that is to say, he was called on, and made a speech of a sort. But he told me later that when he first jumped up he was passionately anxious to speak, then, as attempt after attempt failed, he was still fairly keen and ready, but that after a time he went on jumping simply from force of habit. Indeed, he declared that when at last he heard his name called out by the Speaker he was thinking of other things, so that after all those persistent efforts when the moment came he was not ready.

"I really don't know what I said," he remarked pathetically.

I could not find it in my heart to tell him that no one knew what he meant—but that was the fact.

The most remarkable opening sentence I ever heard in a maiden speech consisted of this manly declaration :

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am a manure merchant in the north of Ireland."

That had an arresting effect.

And I remember also another gentleman from Ireland who rose late one night, and just at the same moment Mr. Balfour, then leading the House, rose to go to his room. The Irish gentleman exclaimed :

" Ah, then, won't the Leader of the House just stop and hear me maiden speech ? "

The appeal went home. Mr. Balfour smiled, bowed, turned back, and courteously listened to a speech with which I am sure he could not agree.

There can be no doubt that in every Parliament there are many gentlemen who never say anything, members who thus earn and should receive the gratitude of their colleagues. As a rule, however, they are unkindly dismissed as " Our Dumb Friends' League." The political agents of these silent men are careful to explain in their constituencies that though they may say nothing in the House they are remarkably strong in Committee upstairs. Again, there are some whose first speech has been the last, though the legend about " single-speech Hamilton " having spoken only once, as the phrase would suggest, is quite incorrect. It is on record that Lord Guildford, a son of Lord North, rose to make a maiden speech, gasped with sudden stage fright, and sat down when he had said " Sir," which is probably the shortest Parliamentary speech on record. Moreover, he was

so thoroughly scared that he applied for the Chiltern Hundreds, and left the House for ever. He can hardly be said to have made a speech, yet he did address the Chair, and thus must be placed between the Dumb Friends' League and the single-speech men. In February 1872 there was a debate when Disraeli spoke, and in which it was necessary for the chief whip on each side to make an explanation. The Government whip was Mr. Glyn, and when he rose he said he had been a member for fifteen years, but as he had not addressed the House before he claimed the indulgence extended to a beginner. I doubt if there has been any other case in modern times of a man not only being in the House for fifteen years, but also attaining front bench rank and the position of chief Government whip without addressing the Speaker, and I fear that to-day patient merit, if it were silent merit, would not carry a man so far.

CHAPTER XI

IN AND OUT OF "ORDER"

THERE are some who maintain that the earliest forms of debate known in history consisted chiefly in "calling names," as the phrase goes, and it is certain that not a few of the rules for the control of debate in Parliament have been framed in order to check this natural tendency. There is one extremely blunt phrase indicative of scepticism now and then heard from the back of a public meeting, and especially at an open-air gathering, which is never allowed in the House, though as I shall show later on there are perfectly decorous and Parliamentary methods of conveying the same meaning. Though according to Blackstone Parliaments or General Councils of some sort are coeval with the kingdom itself, we are accustomed to look on Parliament, as a representative institution, as having been founded in the thirteenth century by Simon de Montfort—an alien immigrant, by the way—but though he was not a native-born British subject, and might in these days have to explain his position to Com-

mittees, he was soon initiated into our political methods, and showed that he understood them.

For example, when Henry III. denounced him as a false traitor, Simon brightly retorted that His Majesty was a liar, and those two words "traitor" and "liar" have been bandied about in British politics ever since, and have been applied to all sorts of people, including so humble a person as myself. There are some who hold that de Montfort devised our Parliamentary institutions so that a number of gentlemen could meet together and say this sort of thing to each other, face to face, and in a manly and honest manner. That may be so, but before long it was found that the exchange of what has become known as "back-chat" was not conducive to business, and that is why the restrictive rules of debate and procedure already mentioned have been drawn up to restrain gentlemen from using the word "liar" in Parliament, though the representatives of a great and free people have always retained the right of hinting something of the sort about each other.

In comparatively modern times the late and great Lord Salisbury genially described another peer in the House of Lords as Titus Oates—and every one knew at once just what the noble marquis meant. Mr. Balfour conveyed the same meaning in a more delicate manner in the House of Commons on one occasion.

It was when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, and an Irish member asked him why a large number of police had been sent to a certain place in Ireland on the previous Sunday, imposing unnecessary expense on the parish or district. Mr. Balfour replied that one reason why the police were sent was the honourable member's presence there, which had a disturbing influence. The member retorted, "But I wasn't there at all," and to this Mr. Balfour replied in perfectly correct Parliamentary form, "I think the honourable gentleman is misinformed."

That was not exactly the Hyde Park style of retort, but in effect Mr. Balfour had said to that member exactly what Simon de Montfort said to Henry III.

Now in ordinary times when party feeling runs high you have three hundred honest gentlemen sitting on each side of the House, and the three hundred on each side are convinced that every one of the three hundred on the other side is a liar. They may think this of some of their own side also, and the strain of keeping back this conviction from open and passionate utterance is sometimes almost intolerable. But as I have shown, relief may sometimes be found in roundabout ways.

I remember hearing Mr. Labouchere ejaculate the single syllable "Ah!" when Mr. (afterwards Lord) Goschen was speaking. Here

again the old meaning was obvious to all, and Mr. Goschen hotly demanded an explanation of that "insolent interruption." But in the end poor Mr. Goschen had to withdraw the word "insolent," while Mr. Labouchere's "Ah!" was allowed to remain, and I regret to say that that remarkable man grinned with delight.

I have known also what may be called the open-air meeting and blunt intimation of more than doubt thus translated into Parliamentary phraseology—"the statement of the right hon. gentleman opposite, when regarded from the standpoint of strict accuracy, leaves something to be desired." No exception can be taken to that, but every one knows what is meant, especially if a little artful emphasis be introduced—and, after all, the meaning is everything. But such milder forms and tempered phrases would have appeared poor and tame indeed to some of the great performers in earlier years. Even in our own—my own—times I have heard the two words already quoted from Simon de Montfort exchanged across the floor, for when Mr. Joseph Chamberlain described Mr. Dillon as "a good judge of traitors," Mr. Dillon applied the other word to him, prefixing to it an emphatic adjective, and so the precedent established in the thirteenth century was observed in the twentieth, with added emphasis. It would be interesting to know what is the

strongest remark ever made in our Parliament at Westminster—though I imagine there can be no doubt as to who would be the winner in the Irish Parliament, in those great days of old, when rhetoric had free course and was glorified. It was in that Assembly that a member known as Mr. Martin of Galway made use of what in its way was the greatest Parliamentary utterance ever heard in any Senate. Mr. George Ponsonby (later on a distinguished legal luminary) was in his place, and his sister, Miss Ponsonby, was in the open and unconcealed gallery. It appears that the lady was laughing at Mr. Martin's oratorical efforts, and he avenged himself by declaring :

"These Ponsonbys are the curse of my country, from that toothless old hag who is now grinning in the gallery to the white-livered scoundrel who is now shivering on the floor."

That has always appeared to me to be a gem, though not of purest ray serene, of Parliamentary oratory. It is brief and bright without being brotherly, while it has a superb and comprehensive sweep, and a fine careless rapture, that recommend it.

I know very little about Mr. Martin of Galway except that he was the author of that memorable outburst, and it would appear that he was given a wide latitude, a noble margin—angels

alone that soar above enjoy such liberty. Nor does the report show that he had to withdraw any of his amusing references to either his fellow-member or the lady.

In later years and in the tamer Parliament at Westminster one of Mr. Martin's fellow-countrymen, Dr. Tanner, attempted with less success a flight of picturesque denunciation. He described the Home Secretary of that day as "one of the basest and meanest skunks that ever sat on the Treasury Bench," and the breezy phrase had to be withdrawn. In these poor degenerate days the word "skunk," even without an adjective of an intensive nature, is coldly ruled out of order. So far as I have been able to learn from watching and studying the decisions from the Chair in regard to such phraseology, it seems that one must not apply the names of still existing members of the brute creation to fellow-members of the House, though the names of extinct creatures may be employed.

I have said elsewhere that Mr. Dillon once pointed to a venerable and highly respected gentleman and exclaimed, "There sits the Dodo," and no one took exception to the phrase. It seemed to be quite fitting and appropriate. And in the same way I have known the words "mammoth," and even "ichthyosaurus," applied to members without any objection. It may be that the introduction of the names of

these old-world monsters has been so sudden as to take the Speaker or his deputy by surprise, and so he has winked at or ignored the offence. But when a member bluntly says that another member is a "skunk," every one else feels that the time to call "Order, order," has arrived. I have heard the phrase, "insolent swine," applied by one member to another, and of course it had to be withdrawn, and I cannot agree with the suggestion of an eminent friend that the alternative expression "arrogant porker" would have been in order.

And what is in order or what is not varies under different Speakers.

It was actually ruled in the days of Lord Melbourne that the phrase, "a member of the Opposition," was out of order—a harsh decision, indeed, that would be resented to-day. And yet in some respects there was much greater freedom in the general use of language then than there is now, for Lord Melbourne used to damn this, that, or the other, in the very presence of Queen Victoria!

More than once the question has been raised as to whether snoring—really audible and noisy snoring—is or is not in order. Not long ago a member who was addressing the House when some other gentleman was loudly snoring complained that the performer was "snoring at him." That was rather a fine

point to raise, for if the snorer was really asleep, his offence, such as it was, was unconscious.

On another occasion a gentleman who observed quite a dozen gentlemen fast asleep when he spoke, accepted the situation in great good humour, and observed pleasantly that he had always found it well to reverse the old saying and to "let lying dogs sleep." The remark was allowed to pass without rebuke.

I suppose Lord North was the most somnolent leader the House ever knew, but he was not always asleep when members thought he was. Thus when a member was assailing him one day, and said with indignation, "Even now, when this country is in so grave a crisis, the noble lord is asleep," Lord North managed to open one eye as he said, "I wish to Heaven I was."

In his later years Mr. Gladstone would sometimes seem to take a nap on the Treasury Bench, but it was found that if some member tried to quote something the great man had said in, say, 1845, Mr. Gladstone would suddenly sit bolt upright, and, pointing a reproving finger at the speaker, would say, "No, no," and would then give a different version.

Of course every one has heard the old and oft-repeated tale about the eighth Duke of Devonshire, when he was Lord Hartington, and in the House of Commons, yawning pro-

digiously while making his maiden speech. A much better version of the tale is this : Lord Hartington was the only man who ever dreamed that he was addressing the House of Commons, and woke up to find that the dream was true.

As was only natural and appropriate, he enjoyed his periods of repose after he was a member of the House of Lords. I remember one occasion, when he sat below the gangway on the Government side in the Lords, some peer began a speech from the other side of the House. The noble Duke crossed over and sat just in front of the speaker, apparently being anxious not to lose a word—and of course the noble lord on his legs was vastly complimented by this attention. But within five minutes the Duke was openly and obviously fast asleep, and so that which had at first looked like a complimentary attention later on appeared to be something very much like an insult. If the Duke had slept in the ordinary manner and in his usual place, no one would have been surprised—indeed, most people would have been quite interested to see him awake. But when he made an effort to cross over the House in order to listen, and then within a few minutes nodded off and slept soundly, the noble lord who was speaking might well feel rather discouraged.

It is to be feared that men remember best the hits in Parliament, if they be telling hits—

the retorts and epigrams and invective, when they are of a high order. Let me mention an incident of a different sort when I heard a memorable compliment paid in circumstances I shall never forget. Mr. Austen Chamberlain had just made his maiden speech—I cannot remember the date, but it must have been between the last few weeks of 1891, when I first attended the House, and the first two months of 1894, when Mr. Gladstone left it. Feeling was then running high; there had been the fierce debates on the second Home Rule Bill, during which, by the way, the House had given itself up on 27th July 1893 to a fierce fight, a real physical struggle, which I witnessed. Whether Mr. Austen Chamberlain spoke before that affair or after I cannot say, but his speech must have been within not many months of it, one way or the other. Naturally enough his father was there listening, and he also listened to the later part of the debate in which Mr. Gladstone, then about eighty-three years of age, took part. During his speech Mr. Gladstone said something to the effect that he would not allude at any length to the speech of the member for East Worcestershire—and at this point Mr. Joseph Chamberlain sat straight up, and his face hardened. He seemingly was expecting some possibly hostile criticism, but when the old statesman added that all he need

say was that it was a speech that must have been refreshing to a father's heart, Mr. Chamberlain flushed deeply and bowed his thanks; indeed, I thought I saw moisture in his eyes—eyes which seldom softened. No doubt Mr. Austen Chamberlain welcomed such a compliment, as he might well welcome it from such a man, but I believe it pleased his father more. That is an incident that may well be treasured in the memory, and I remember thinking at the time of a reference made by Trevelyan to a speech made by Gladstone in 1841—"Mr. Gladstone had early learned that habit of high-toned courtesy which is the presage of future greatness." And fifty years later, when his greatness was known and read of all men, the habit of high-toned courtesy was still in evidence, as well as his invariable practice of trying to encourage young members in their first Parliamentary efforts.

CHAPTER XII

MATTER AND MANNER

THERE is much that goes on in Parliament which is not only unknown to the outside public but also to most of the members themselves. As I have said in a previous chapter, there are Parliamentary doings that should never be divulged, and there are others the record of which may be "released" after the lapse of years. What I am about to relate may now be told without any breach of confidence or offence against propriety.

It has often been said, and the remark is of the nature of a commonplace, that a speech to be effective in Parliament (or elsewhere) should be to the point, but I can remember one speech delivered from the Treasury Bench in the House of Commons which had no sort of relation near or remote to the question before the House, and yet it answered the speaker's purpose, and was indeed entirely successful.

Only one man was aware at the time of what really happened, and I believe the facts have not hitherto been published.

The incident occurred in 1894, when Sir William Harcourt was carrying through his famous Budget, and all those who followed the debates at that time will remember how closely and even affectionately Sir William watched over the progress of his measure. It happened, however, that on one occasion his doctors strongly urged him to take a day's rest, and so on the day before his proposed absence he consulted with a junior Minister, saying that there were only two amendments of any importance to come on the next day, and that the Government could not accept either of them. The junior Minister was advised to see an eminent Treasury official in order to have the Government's case carefully prepared, "and," added Sir William, "if he thinks there is any point of law involved you should see Rigby" —the well-known Sir John Rigby, at that time a law officer, who had become a great favourite with the House because on one occasion a big and well-seasoned pipe had slipped from his pocket on the Treasury Bench.

The facts were told to me by the eminent Treasury official who was consulted by the junior Minister, so I had the information at first hand.

There was no difficulty in drawing up the Government's reply to each of the amendments, and the junior Minister appeared to grasp all the points readily enough. He was by tempera-

ment rather a diffident and even a meek man, but he looked forward to the opportunity of bowling over his hostile critic, and when the day came he sat waiting his turn inspired by the feeling that he is thrice armed who hath his quarrel just. The Treasury official was seated under the gallery in order to see how the affair went off.

The first amendment was duly moved, and then the junior Minister rose, and with quite unusual vigour he began by declaring that it was amazing that any one should submit an amendment of that sort when the objections to it were so obvious. Then, warming to his work and putting his back into it, he gave what he conceived to be the Government's answer—but the Treasury official was startled when he noticed that the Minister was giving answer number two to amendment number one. But the speech went on and no one seemed to see that it had no bearing on the case whatever. The official, who was, as I have said, at first startled, soon became amused.

The members were listless, and when the Ministerial reply was ended the gentleman who had moved the amendment, and who seemed rather bewildered by the reply, rose and said that after the explanation they had just heard he was ready to withdraw the amendment—and as a matter of fact it was by leave withdrawn.

The Treasury official then said to himself, "This is all very well, but a man cannot escape twice in this way, and when my friend gives answer number one to amendment number two he will be in a mess." The situation was, however, saved by the fact that just as the second amendment was being moved Sir William Harcourt unexpectedly came in—finding it impossible to keep away from his pet Budget. So he undertook the reply, and of course it was to the point.

But no one other than the watchful official knew that an amendment had been withdrawn because of a speech that had nothing whatever to do with the case, and that was never intended to meet it or even to refer to it in any way!

It is possible that there may have been other Ministerial replies now and then that have been as wide of the mark, but I doubt if any other Minister has ever been so completely unconscious of the fact that when seemingly replying to one set of arguments he was talking about something else. And I doubt also if on any other occasion all the members present, including of course the gentleman particularly concerned, have been so easily and so unreasonably satisfied.

The famous Lord Chesterfield had a great contempt for the intelligence of the House of Commons in his day, and used to say that it

mattered not what one said there so long as one employed "harmonious periods." But he once succeeded in deluding the House of Lords by delivering a speech on a topic about which he knew absolutely nothing. It was at the time of the proposed reform of the Calendar, and while conscious of the fact that he did not understand the subject, he made a long and graceful speech about Calendars in general from the days of the ancient Egyptians down to his own time. The speech was very well received; indeed, the other noble lords were delighted with it. They said that Lord Chesterfield had "made the whole very clear to them," but in his *Letters to his Son* the noble lord candidly remarks, "God knows I had not even attempted it."

And so success has sometimes been achieved not only when it has not been deserved, but even when it has not been really aimed at—while many and many a laborious and honest effort has ended in failure. It does not follow, however, that you are sure to succeed by not understanding the subject, or by talking about something else.

I have heard it said many a time that in Parliament everything depends on the manner in which a man speaks, and not on the matter in his speech. No doubt such a remark is of too sweeping a nature, but style and good

delivery will make a little go a long way in the House of Commons. Let me tell another tale about a case in which success was gained in a very curious way in the House of Commons—a true tale that is, I believe, not generally known.

In 1860 Mr. Alexander William Kinglake was a member of Parliament. He was then known chiefly as the author of *Eothen*, and later on became famous as the historian of the Crimean War. His speeches were admirable so far as the matter was concerned, containing valuable information and well-reasoned argument expressed in language of great beauty. But they had no effect at all, for his delivery was shocking. Few could hear what he said, and his style was wearisome and monotonous, while his voice was thin, squeaky and rasping. Now it happened that in 1860 there was a great Foreign Affairs debate, and Kinglake spoke, with the usual result that much learning and eloquence were completely thrown away and wasted. But there was one member—Sir Robert Peel the second—who happened to sit near Kinglake, and he was immensely taken by many passages in the speech, and particularly by a remarkably fine peroration.

The debate was to be continued the following day, and Sir Robert went in a manly and straightforward manner to Kinglake asking to be allowed to use that peroration, and some of the other passages as his own, pointing out

that they had been entirely lost. Kinglake was much amused by this request, but readily gave his consent.

Up to that time Sir Robert had been known only as a very boisterous and rollicking jocular speaker, but when he spoke in that Foreign Affairs debate he amazed the House by his serious eloquence, recommended by a splendid voice and appropriate gesture and delivery. William White, the door-keeper of the House, who wrote *The Inner Life of the House of Commons*, specially notes the sudden change and improvement in Peel's speech on that occasion. He says: "The hon. baronet delivered a speech which, whether we consider the sentiments uttered, the eloquent language in which they were delivered, or the striking and appropriate manner with which they were enforced, we must decide was one of the most successful efforts of modern days." No doubt Sir Robert deserved all the credit given him in regard to the "striking and appropriate manner," but the sentiments and the eloquent language had been borrowed —and Mr. Justin M'Carthy has specially noted that the long and elaborate peroration "brought the House down." Those who cheered it were quite unaware of the fact that it was only a recitation—a repetition word for word of what had been uttered in the House on the previous day during the same discussion—probably the

only case on record of the same peroration doing service twice during one debate.

The next incident has to do with a part of Parliamentary life in regard to which rumour runs riot, about which very little is really known, and as to which, perhaps, even less should be said. But here again I know I am quite justified in making the following facts public—indeed, some of them are related in official reports, though others are not.

Towards the end of the year 1908 unsettling rumours were whispered round the House of Commons to the effect that the dinner bills of members were liable to be hunted up, examined, and possibly used as raw material for the base purpose of platform attack. This was no party question, and a common danger brought together men who seldom agreed about anything. Now and then, but not often, there has been a leakage of information as to Cabinet Council proceedings, and that has always been regarded as deplorable, but the possibility of these other revelations was more disturbing, and so a question was put to Sir Alfred Jacoby, then the Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, so that the rumours could be officially denied, or that members might know the worst.

Sir Alfred used to answer questions of this sort in the great way, "after the high Roman fashion." And on this occasion he had his reply written on a very large sheet of paper,

slowly and solemnly reading it through a huge magnifying glass about the size of an ordinary saucer. I shall not soon forget the strained attention of honourable gentlemen as he made the memorable and reassuring statement that "It is the practice of the Kitchen Committee to treat dinner bills of members as private, and I have given strict orders that no member's dinner bill is to be subject to investigation." Then the members breathed again, and Sir Alfred Jacoby sat down amid general applause, as he scrutinised his fellow-members through the magnifying glass.

This was by no means the only Kitchen Committee crisis which Sir Alfred confronted and to which he proved equal.

A little earlier in his career he had met and disposed of a very insidious suggestion. It had been resolved to entertain the Colonial Premiers, who were visiting this country in connection with the Diamond Jubilee, at a luncheon in Westminster Hall, and a joint committee of the two Houses had been appointed to make the preliminary arrangements. One day a representative of that joint committee waited on Sir Alfred and the other members of the Kitchen Committee and coolly proposed that they should submit a sample luncheon in competition with Messrs. Lyons!

There was dead silence for a moment, and the astounded members looked to their Chair-

man to rise to the occasion, to save the situation, nor did they look in vain.

Sir Alfred gazed long and earnestly through the well-known magnifying glass at this rash intruder, as if trying to make sure that the man was real, and was not a vision or a spook. At length Sir Alfred spoke, and in a voice of studied calm, still "training" the big glass on the offender, he said, "Do I hear you aright, sir? Am I to understand that you have come here with the proposal that we, the Kitchen Committee of the House of Commons, are to enter into competition with Messrs. Lyons, and are to submit a rival luncheon for your consideration?" The visitor hesitated, as if about to yell "Help," but at length he said rather feebly that such was the message he had been instructed to deliver. Upon this Sir Alfred fully, frankly and finally refused to stoop to any competition with any one, in a spirit worthy of the proud words, "Aut Cæsar aut nullus."

It was soon after this, and possibly because of this, that Sir Alfred was entertained at a dinner by his colleagues, and his health was proposed by Colonel Lockwood (now Lord Lambourne), who had been his predecessor, and became his successor, in office.

As was the case with some of Chatham's most famous orations, so with the Colonel's speech on this occasion—only fragments have

been preserved for the benefit of posterity. But it is known that Uncle Mark there and then suggested that the Chairman of the Kitchen Committee should have conferred on him a chain, a badge and a robe of office, something like a blending of the State dress and decorations worn by the Lord Mayor and by Knights of the Garter. The proposal was received with rapturous applause. Unfortunately Sir Alfred, with that modesty which always distinguishes the truly great, declined to accept these rewards, though he explained that he recognised the kindly motive of those who made the suggestion.

The scene was worthy of Cromwell declining the Crown, or of that other incident related in Mark Antony's words uttered over the dead body of Cæsar :

> "You all did see, that on the Lupercal
> I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
> Which he did thrice refuse: Was this ambition?"

There was another proposal made about the same time—and I still think it was a good one, though perhaps I ought not to say so, as it came from myself. I suggested that two pictures should be added to those that adorn the walls of Parliament, one showing Sir Alfred Jacoby repulsing the insolent person who had invited the Kitchen Committee to compete with some outside caterer, and the other showing Sir Alfred declining an official or State robe. But nothing

came of the suggestion, and already these incidents are fading away into the twilight of fable and romance.

I have mentioned Colonel Lockwood as one who preceded and succeeded Sir Alfred Jacoby as Chairman of the Kitchen Committee. It has become so customary as to be almost inevitable when mentioning the Colonel's name to add that he is known as "Uncle Mark." This is nearly always said, just as no allusion to "Bobbie" Spencer is complete without the addendum that he once said he was not an agricultural labourer. But I wonder how many men now in the House could explain how the Colonel first became known as "Uncle Mark."

It happened in this way—at the opening of a new Parliament years ago the members were slowly making their way to the tables arranged on the floor so as to take the oath and sign the roll. By accident the late Frank Lockwood and the Colonel were close together in the throng, and some one asked Frank Lockwood if he and the Colonel were related. As a matter of fact they were not, but Frank Lockwood answered, "Oh yes, that's my good, kind Uncle Mark," and the description has stuck to the Colonel ever since. And he was so long associated with the Kitchen Committee, and his name has been so often mentioned in connection with it, that it is said some of his constituents used to think that

he performed menial duties in the House, and spent most of his time not in the Chamber but in the kitchen.

There was a time when the Terrace provided quite a large revenue for the Kitchen Committee, though not many years have passed since it first became customary to entertain strangers there to tea and other refreshments. Some of the older members frowned on this new departure, saying it tempted members away from their duties in the House, and I well remember that Sir William Harcourt, a very great Parliament man, declared, "The Terrace will be the ruin of the House." And so, when the throng of ladies increased on the Terrace, some of the gentlemen of the old school made a protest, and they succeeded in having one part of the Terrace reserved for members only. There is a notice board showing the dividing line, or frontier, and when it was first put up some of the ladies resented this new restriction. They described the members who demanded privacy as "the Bears," and one afternoon a particularly sprightly young lady fixed a bun on the sharp end of her parasol stick, and, holding it across this dividing line, smilingly invited the bears to come and be fed. The gentlemen concerned resented this attention, and protested to the Kitchen Committee, but what could Uncle Mark, or any one else, do in the circumstances ?

CHAPTER XIII

THE PARLIAMENTARY JOKE

IT has been placed on record by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, one of the most estimable of men, that "the speaking in the House of Commons is of a very peculiar kind; the House loves good sense and good joking, and nothing else." And it is certainly true that the House is not only ready but is anxious to be amused; indeed, there is something almost pathetic in the eagerness with which members welcome and reward those who make them laugh. I do not wish to suggest that mere buffoonery will do, and the man is not to be envied who thinks he is being funny when the House is sure he is being rude. But when the right note is struck in this style of speaking there is no better audience in the world than the House of Commons. Indeed, it may easily become dangerously friendly to an unwary speaker, for he may be so carried away by the shouts of applause and laughter as to lose the thread of his speech. Now, while the House will encourage a man so long as he

pleases it, it will drop him at once, and yawn or talk, directly he begins to flounder. As I have recorded, what Sir T. F. Buxton said was that the House "loves good joking," and some one else has said, or is supposed to have said, that a Parliamentary joke is often no laughing matter. Be that as it may, I think there can be no doubt as to what is the biggest Parliamentary joke on record—and the consequences of the joke were both serious and satisfactory. The facts are related by Bishop Burnet in his *History of His Own Times*, and they show that the Habeas Corpus Act was really dodged through the House of Lords in 1680 by a merry trick quite worthy of the pantomime season. This is the Bishop's account of the affair :

It was carried by an odd artifice in the House of Lords. Lord Grey and Lord Norris were named to be tellers. Lord Norris, being a man subject to vapours, was not at all times attentive to what he was doing, so a very fat lord coming in, Lord Grey counted him for ten, as a jest at first, but seeing Lord Norris had not observed it, he went on with this misreckoning of ten ; so it was reported to the House and declared that they who were for the Bill were in the majority, though indeed it went on the other side, and by this means the Bill was passed.

This seems almost too good to be true—a sort of Parliamentary Joe Millerism. But it is on

record that Mr. Speaker Onslow years later corroborated the story by a reference to the official records of the House of Lords, and to a comparison of the number of peers that day present with the number reported as being in the division; and he must be a hardy sceptic who would doubt a statement made by a Bishop and confirmed by a Speaker.

And so this famous measure, that has been so often hailed by rhetorical gentlemen as the "Palladium of our Liberties," was passed because one noble teller was of a waggish disposition and another was a mooning gentleman subject to vapours. Nor should we forget the "very fat lord" whose presence and fatness were essential to the success of the trick. His name has not come down to us, but during all the years in which he was silently increasing in bulk he was preparing himself to render this service to the Constitution, perhaps at the expense of his own. One grave historian in commenting on this incident has said that "the trick arose, perhaps, in the first instance from whim, but the perseverance in it can little be justified on principles even of the most obvious honesty." Perhaps the grave historian is right, but I think most people will agree that in this case, at any rate, the end justified the means, and the incident shows the seventeenth-century House of Lords in a very amiable light.

There is on record another incident of a more or less rollicking nature in the House of Lords so quaint and unusual as to be almost incredible, and yet it is said to be well authenticated. It seems that the Prince Regent, who had no excessive reverence for Parliamentary institutions, had more than once to read the Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament. On one occasion he bet his friend Sheridan one hundred guineas he would introduce the phrase, "Baa, baa, black sheep," into the King's Speech—and he did it and won his bet. Moreover, no one present seemed to be surprised or even concerned at all by the introduction of words that were, to say the least, not quite relevant. Of course Sheridan had noticed them, as he had staked a hundred guineas on the event, and later on he asked Canning if he had heard the curious interpolation. The story goes that Canning answered, "Oh yes, I heard the words, but, as the Prince seemed to be looking steadily at you, I thought it was only a personal allusion, and so thought no more about it." I may be wrong, but I have always regarded that as a smart afterthought on the part of Canning in order to score at the expense of Sheridan.

Most Parliamentary jokes, however, are quite different in style from those two. It is easy to raise a laugh in the House of Commons, for

there is a vast variety of laughter heard there, and much of it has nothing to do with wit or humour or fun. There is the partisan laugh, the incredulous laugh and the loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind—and here I use the word " vacant " as meaning empty, and not as Goldsmith used it as meaning free from care or anxiety. There is, indeed, in the House of Commons such a thing as the savage laugh, or, as I may put it, the laugh of hate. All these displays have nothing to do with Parliamentary jokes.

But to-day, as at all times, the House warmly welcomes any excuse for a roar of good-humoured laughter in which all can join, which does good to all and hurts the feelings of no one. Looking back over about twenty-seven years of experience in listening to debates, there is one occasion that still stands out in my memory when there was the loudest and longest laugh, again and again renewed, that I ever heard within those walls. To appreciate the joke the reader must understand the surrounding circumstances. Mr. Balfour was leading the House, and had made a speech of great force and brilliance—a speech that was admired —had to be admired—by friends and opponents alike. Later in the debate he was followed by one of his junior colleagues, an Under-Secretary, who happened to be a little man.

Now it is not considered quite the thing for a junior Minister to indulge in gushing eulogies about his leader—the idea being, I imagine, that unworthy people might suppose that the junior Minister was trying to obtain promotion. On this occasion, however, the Under-Secretary (who was an excellent man, and who is not now in the House) broke through the unwritten rule, and paid Mr. Balfour a series of extremely handsome compliments. Then came Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and he hit off the situation somewhat in this way : " When the leader of an orchestra has achieved a great triumph, it is natural and proper that he should be applauded by the public—but we don't expect to hear loud cheers from the little gintleman who played the triangle in the band." The little " gintleman " in question gave a start—then came the roar of universal laughter, renewed again and again. And what I remember with most pleasure is the fact that the victim of this humorous allusion was within one minute laughing as heartily as any one. There had been no malice in the hit, and once more it was made clear that the best of all humour is good humour.

I have often thought that newspaper readers who are unacquainted with the House and its atmosphere must sometimes wonder where the joke comes in as they read that " loud laughter " followed some remark that in print appears to

be by no means amusing. Let me give an illustration of this. On one occasion questions had been put as to the number of people employed in the Ministry of Munitions—their duties, their pay, their conditions of service, and so forth. Indeed, a return had been asked for giving these details. The answer was given by Dr. Addison, in the absence of Mr. Lloyd George, and it had been explained that about 3000 people were employed, that the number was growing daily, that the conditions of service were continually changing, and that the preparation of a return would involve excessive labour.

After more supplementary questions, Mr. H. A. Watt, one of the Glasgow members, asked this curious, and as some may think irrelevant, question, " Can the honourable gentleman say what is now the population of Wales ? " No one in the House thought that this was irrelevant, and there was an instantaneous roar. Every one saw the sly allusion that Mr. Lloyd George had been transferring a great part of the population of Wales from their native hills and valleys to the more sheltered pastures in Whitehall. Indeed all sorts of tales had been told to the effect that if any one were to shout outside the offices of the Ministry of Munitions, " Is Evan Evans there ? " more than a thousand heads would be popped out of the windows with the answer, " Yesss ! look you, whateffer ! "

And it was because members had heard these little tales—grossly caricaturing the facts of the case—that they saw the pertinence of Mr. Watt's innocent curiosity about the population of Wales.

Another good joke that lingers in the memory of those who heard it was contributed by the nimble-witted Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, generally known as "Jerry," for it seems so inappropriate as to be really grotesque that such a man should be called "Jeremiah." Here again the circumstances surrounding the incident need explanation. One night Mr. Rowland Hunt, an impetuous but sound-hearted man, suddenly attacked his leader, Mr. Balfour, making the usual allusions to philosophic doubt and so forth. His party resented the attack, and for a time Mr. Hunt did not receive the usual communications from the whip—a form of Parliamentary ostracism. Then it was announced in the papers one morning that he had been forgiven and readmitted into favour. That night Mr. Hunt was walking up the floor of the House after a division, and it happened that he was followed by Sir William Bull, a gentleman who may be described as by no means emaciated in appearance. It was then that Jerry MacVeagh was heard to exclaim, "Here comes the Prodigal Son followed by the fatted calf"—and the fact that the second gentleman was somewhat

rotund, and that his name Bull was suggested in the allusion, caused a shout of laughter from a delighted House. Of course one does not expect any rollicking exuberance of this sort from Mr. Asquith, but I have known him display ready wit of a scholastic or literary type on occasions when there has been no opportunity for preparation. One illustration of this, which I remember, was given at the end of February 1906, during the short time when Mr. Balfour was not a member, for he did not re-enter the House as member for the City of London after his defeat in Manchester until 12th March. In his absence Mr. Joseph Chamberlain led the Opposition, and the Government had agreed to give a day for a debate on the fiscal question. On the day before the date in question it was found that Mr. Joseph Chamberlain could not be present, and so Mr. Austen Chamberlain asked that the debate might be put off. Mr. Asquith (who was leading the House in the absence of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman) gravely answered, "We all feel that the debate on the fiscal question would be very incomplete in the absence of both the right honourable gentlemen —it would be like playing *Hamlet* in the absence not only of the Prince of Denmark, but also of the ghost. I will not presume to allocate these parts as between the two right hon. gentlemen themselves." Some member called out

" Where's the grave-digger ? "—a not inappropriate question at the time, for in 1906 it really appeared as if the policy in question had been buried.

Before leaving this subject of Parliamentary jokes let me say that while there is nothing more enjoyable than a really clever humorous or witty speech, especially if the jokes are made not merely for their own sake, but to illustrate or drive home some point, there is nothing more saddening and depressing than an attempt that fails. Some of the most able men that the House has ever known have been incapable of success in this direction, and as a rule they have recognised their limitations. I suppose the House has not often contained among its members a more widely informed man than Sir Charles Dilke, but he was not a wit, still less was he a humorist. One night—and only on one occasion, so far as I can remember—he tried to light up an able argumentative speech by an excursion into what he obviously thought was the realm of humour. The attempt was not a success; indeed, it ended in a failure that was more than distressing—it was ghastly.

CHAPTER XIV

DIVIDING LINES

NOTHING surprises a man more who has had years of experience as to the inside of Parliamentary life, than to notice the absolute ignorance of the outside public in regard to the real differences and distinctions that exist at Westminster. Thus it is an utter delusion to suppose that the chief dividing line that separates members in Parliament is in any way connected with party differences. Far more important than anything of that sort is the line drawn between the old member and the new, and this is, of course, most observable just after a General Election when a Parliament is new, and a certain number of gentlemen are there for the first time.

I have no doubt that the old member does not intend to be offensive to the new, and yet he treats that new member with an air of affable condescension that is worse than open brutality. For quite a long time few of the more experienced members when addressing the House fail to make use of some such phrase as this : " It is of

course unnecessary to remind gentlemen who have had the advantage of sitting in previous Parliaments, but for the sake of those who have recently come among us I may say that——" And then comes some elementary information, such as that the first reading of a Bill is taken before the second, or something of that sort.

The fact is that the old member regards the new as an abject imbecile who has to be told everything as if he were a little child.

This is made quite clear when the experienced man guides the newcomer round the building introducing him to the place. He will take the novice into the Chamber itself and will carefully explain, pointing down, "Now this is the floor of the House, and up there is the gallery. If you want to get into the gallery you must go upstairs. That round white thing at the end of the House is the clock, and you look at it when you want to know the time." Then they pass into the Lobby, and the new man is shown the Post Office, and is told that stamps may be obtained there, also that letters posted there are collected and sent away to their destinations. He is also assured that in the Library there are books which he may read, and the same remark applies to newspapers in another room.

Then the old hand will say with an air of owning the whole place, "It's rather convenient,

isn't it ? " and the new man says, or is expected to say, abjectly, " It is really marvellous."

But of course he soon gets over that, and after a few weeks he may be seen lounging about the place in the best Westminster manner as though he thought the whole place a bore and was of opinion that the session had lasted far too long.

So this dividing line between the new and the old disappears to some extent. But you will find that when a group of about half a dozen members are chatting, if it happens that one of the group has been in the House fifteen or twenty years, and he discovers that none of his friends has been there more than ten years, he will most certainly begin to talk about the wonderful things that were to be seen and heard before the others appeared on the scene. That is inevitable, and I have often been amused by the easy-going allusions to the glories of the " old days "—and even more amused if by chance some still more experienced man, with a record of, say, thirty years' service in the House, joins the group. For then it is made clear that the really golden age was enjoyed long before those " old days " about which the other has been enlarging with gusto.

There is, however, a greater dividing line than that between the new and the old member—it is more than a dividing line, it is a great gulf

separating the front-bench man from the man who is not front bench. Here the difference is as great as that existing between the poor wretch who is hacking the turf in his first attempt at golf and the scratch or plus man, or between the raw recruit and the staff officer. It is not easy to explain or to understand this difference—but it is known and felt and recognised at Westminster, though of course it is not so marked at present as it was before the days when sixty or seventy gentlemen have the right to sit on the front bench.

Front-bench men enjoy many privileges that are denied to the back-bencher. To begin with, they have a good solid table on which they can lean, and which they can thump when speaking. They get moral as well as physical support from that piece of furniture. There is something really pathetic in the appearance of a right hon. gentleman who has left the front-bench sphere, and who speaks from a back seat, as he can be seen feeling out for the table from force of habit. The man who can place one elbow on one of the boxes on the table, and look down the House as he waves the other arm about is conscious of having an advantage over other men. In such circumstances a remark that is really of a commonplace nature is apt to sound like the last word of wisdom.

Then the atmosphere of the front bench

seems to encourage the use of fine old Parliamentary formulas. A front-bench man will " venture to say " something, or will " go so far as to venture to say " it, or will even " beg leave to go so far as to venture to say " it, and the phraseology seems to suit his surroundings. There is no Standing or Sessional Order, and no rule of procedure forbidding the private member to use these sound old phrases, but there is a general understanding that such conduct would be unbecoming.

Again, a front-bench man when speaking may swing round to his followers, and rouse them with an upward sweep of the arm to cheer. This is known as the "up guards and at 'em " movement, and is appropriate and effective when indulged in by a man standing at the table. But an attempt at anything of the sort by a back-bencher would be ludicrous, and would be resented by his colleagues as presumptuous.

In recent years nearly every front-bench man has been allotted a private room, snug and well-furnished—and gloomy back-benchers will tell you that whenever a Minister retreats to his private room it is to sprawl on a comfortable sofa, smoke cigarettes and read novels. Needless to say, this is a fiction, but the legend is immortal, and it explains the savage outbursts on the part of private members who want to know where the absent Ministers are and what they are doing.

These questions are sometimes asked in so suggestive and sinister a manner that a stranger might well suppose that the absentees were engaged in making spurious coin or forging Treasury notes. Of course, no one will be surprised to find that a back-bencher who has been most zealous in protesting against these supposed soft delights will suddenly become their most sturdy defender should he find his way to the Treasury Bench.

Some old author, when writing about the British Constitution, has said that "the resemblance between the present Constitution and that from which it sprang is not much nearer than that between the most beautiful fly and the abject worm from which it arose." One may say something of the sort in regard to the difference between the Parliamentary chrysalis and the Parliamentary butterfly—for nothing will induce me to employ so derogatory a phrase as "abject worm" when referring to the private member. But there is a marvellous transformation, and it is interesting to watch its processes.

The gentleman who has been in the habit of putting awkward and heated questions, and even more scorching supplementary questions, begins to restrain his noble rage. He will even ask friendly and leading questions, known as "put-up jobs." It is noticed, also, that though he was always ready and even eager to join in the gossip of the day in the Lobby, originating,

or passing on, all sorts of rumour, he begins to be rather aloof in his methods. He will stalk through the busy scene staring right on with calm, eternal eyes, as though voyaging through strange seas of thought alone. When he cannot escape, and is directly questioned on some point, he will explain with semi-official courtesy that he is unable to say anything as his lips are sealed. And here I may add that no member, private or official, ever says, "I don't know" in reply to a question. Such an avowal would cause him to lose caste, and would stamp him either as an ignoramus or as a poor-spirited fellow.

When the changes in a man's demeanour such as I have mentioned are observed, an experienced onlooker knows what is going to happen. Even as the wise old mariner can detect the coming storm singing in the upper chambers of the air long before the land-lubber suspects anything, so the watchful Parliamentarian is conscious of the coming change in a colleague's status. And when at last the chrysalis becomes the butterfly, and the gentleman who was but the other day the ferocious champion of private members' rights lolls on the Treasury Bench, who so keen as he to maintain the privileges he has just begun to enjoy?

CHAPTER XV

ALL-NIGHT SITTINGS

DURING recent years, and particularly since 1914, the House has not known any really late sittings, and I do not remember any occasion in the last ten years that was quite worthy of being called an all-night sitting. The phrase has been very loosely applied of late to a sitting that lasted only an hour or two beyond the usual hour for adjournment, and I have known it employed by newspapers in regard to a sitting that did not last beyond half-past two in the morning. My own view is that the phrase is out of place unless the members are kept in the House not only until the sun rises on the other side of the river, behind St. Thomas's Hospital, but until breakfast is laid out in the dining-room. It is on such an occasion that the House enjoys or endures a real all-night sitting, and all such tugs-of-war resemble each other in certain main features.

At the beginning, that is to say, about midnight, when members know they are in for it, they are bad-tempered and defiant, and they

become worse, more ill-humoured and more defiant, until about four in the morning. On the Opposition side there are always repeated demands that progress (of which there has been none) should be reported. It is pointed out that serious business cannot be carried on in a proper spirit in such circumstances. Then there are sure to be feeling allusions to the strain placed on the officials of the House and on the excellent police. I have even known sympathetic references to the gentlemen of the Press and their arduous labours—references sometimes received with grins by those martyrs in the cause of public duty.

The Minister in charge invariably replies to these appeals by very polite explanations that, much as he would like to release the House, the exigencies of public business compel him regretfully to oppose the motion, but while he is polite his followers back him up by fierce shouts and contemptuous laughter. The Opposition retort that Nero in his worst moments would have shrunk from such cold-blooded brutality as that exhibited by the Government and its noisy henchmen—and so the game goes on.

The business before the House could easily be done in less than a quarter of the time spent or wasted in explaining that there is not enough time for the performance of the work in question.

But it always happens that at about four

in the morning tempers begin to improve, and as time goes on men become more and more genial, until at length they are boisterously friendly. Every man who speaks is loudly cheered, it matters not what he says. Even the Minister in charge, who a few hours earlier had been accused of out-Nero-ing Nero, finds himself quite a general favourite. The fact is, members are proud of having sat up all night, and they despise all absentees—calling down

> "Shame on the private member
> Who lingers in his home,
> When Whips and special messengers
> Have summoned him to come."

Sometimes it happens that a relay of fresh men will turn up about breakfast-time, and they are ashamed of their spruce appearance. The all-night heroes, on the other hand, are proud of their unshaven chins, and their crushed shirt-fronts put on with their dinner-dress the night before.

There are sun-blinds outside the windows on one side of the House to keep out the afternoon rays, but there are no blinds on the other side, and the cold morning sunshine streams in and blackens every blot on the Ministerial side, but the members welcome this trying glare, and sit there courting inspection. And when all is over the men who have "stuck it out," as they say, congratulate each other warmly, and those who began the struggle

filled with mutual fury take leave of each other with expressions of something like affection.

I remember very well one notable all-night sitting that lasted until a little after one o'clock in the afternoon of the second day—not the longest, by any means, I have known.

I forget the date, but it could easily be ascertained because of a curious coincidence, for while the great legislative machine at Westminster may be said to have stuck, the great wheel which was then at Earl's Court also stuck, and refused to go round. There were little bets made as to whether the House would rise or the wheel move first, and when the evening papers came out at about half-past ten in the morning, the contents bills conveyed this message to the town—"House still sitting; wheel still stuck," and the bets were increased.

Now during that long sitting Mr. Lloyd George, who was then a remarkably enterprising private member of the Opposition, was very active, and having defied, or at any rate failed to comply with, some ruling of the Chair, he was suspended. At that time he was in partnership with a gentleman in a firm of solicitors, and while Mr. Lloyd George was suspended in the House his one partner was suspended in the big wheel.

So the whole of the eminent firm was suspended that night—and while the partner

received five pounds as compensation for his trouble, Mr. Lloyd George had to be satisfied with the approval of his own conscience.

On another occasion when the House sat all night, another gentleman who was then a prominent member of the Welsh Party—and became an eminent judge—greatly distinguished himself. I allude to Sir Samuel Evans, known to all in those days as "Sam Evans," whose very recent death is so widely lamented.

It was at about four in the morning, and the debate was becoming rather thin. What the subject before the House was I cannot now say, but it had something to do with rates and tithes, and Sir Samuel noticed in some clause or amendment the words "oblations and obventions." That was good enough for him, and he immediately fastened on those words.

"What is an oblation?" he asked, and members called out "Ah!" as if recognising that much depended on that point.

Then he astounded the House by a display of learning, enlarging on the word "oblationem," the accusative of "oblatio," an offering. And this, he explained, came from "oblatus," the past participle of "offero" for "obfero," to offer. In confirmation of this he favoured the House with a long Latin passage from one of the Early Fathers, and when the rapturous applause had ceased he smilingly congratulated

the members on the fact that they had not allowed their classical scholarship to get rusty.

Then, of course, he began again with the question : " And what is an obvention ? "

Once more the expectant members roared an anticipatory " Ah ! " and he went away with much learning about " obventio," that which comes to a person's lot, from " obvenio," to come in the way of, and this could be traced to " ob," against, and " venio " to come. This prepared the way for another fine, rattling quotation in Latin, delivered *ore rotundo*, and once more the House rang with honest applause.

I remember that when Mr. Evans (as he then was) sat down he was privately congratulated by Mr. Balfour and Mr. George Wyndham on having both informed and entertained the House, though he had successfully delayed for a long time the business that these two gentlemen wanted to carry through.

It is a curious fact that there is no reference to this memorable speech in any of the official records, and I believe that the only attempt at anything like a report is to be found in a very inadequate sketch that I wrote at the time in the Press.

I have already quoted an eminent man's remark to the effect that the House " loves good sense and good joking, and nothing else," and while there may not be an over-supply of

good sense in an all-night sitting, there is often plenty of good joking, especially towards the end of the sitting. Possibly the consciousness that there is less reporting at such a time encourages members to let themselves go a little more freely than usual. The interruptions become far more pointed, and I have heard allusions made to members' trades or professions, and even to peculiarities in their physical appearance, during the small hours of the morning, that have been laughed away merrily, though they would have been gravely condemned had they been indulged in during a quiet afternoon.

Dr. Tanner was, during his prime, a favourite performer in the early hours of the morning.

I remember a gentleman who sat on the front bench below the gangway on the Opposition side making a speech about the helmets, or headgear, supplied to the yeomanry. He complained that they had a bad effect, being unventilated and unhealthy, and it happened that the member who made this complaint, though not an old man, was perfectly bald, his pate presenting a polished and shining surface, as innocent of hair as is a billiard ball. When he had finished, Dr. Tanner, who was sitting just behind him, rose and supported these contentions. The bald member could not see what the merry Irishman was doing, but as Dr. Tanner went on to enlarge on the terrible

effects of these helmets, he kept pointing to the bald head in front of him. It was as if he was lecturing on baldness, and was using his honourable friend as an illustration.

A performance of this sort may be a huge success at four in the morning, but it would be quite a failure at four in the afternoon.

In the small hours, too, I have known members mimic any one who shows a marked peculiarity of style when speaking. It is not very long since—though before the war—that I listened to a member who had rather a mincing way of addressing the House, the style rightly or wrongly associated with a curate saying a few words at a penny-reading. Before long he was interrupted with cries of "Ah-men," "Let us pray," "The collection will now be made," and other remarks which, while not strictly relevant to the subject before the House, had a direct and all too obvious reference to the manner in which it was being presented. I am well aware that no undue strain is placed on the intellect of those who indulge in such elementary efforts to be witty, but they add to the House's stock of harmless pleasure, at any rate during the later hours of an all-night sitting. The business done on these occasions is often ill-done, and some of the legislation that is the outcome of prolonged sittings puzzles judges who have to administer the law, and provides

remunerative employment for counsel who argue about it. The only other set of men who really benefit by these Parliamentary tugs-of-war are the members of the Kitchen Committee who at such times have been able to dispose of stale and half-mouldy provisions from which members would have turned with disdain in other circumstances.

CHAPTER XVI

AMENITIES OF DEBATE

WHILE I have already had something to say about Parliamentary jokes, good or indifferent, let me now explain that there is another form of effort in debate very nearly associated with the joke—I mean the Parliamentary retort, or interruption. And every man of experience knows that while there is nothing more effective than a good retort dexterously shot in at a hostile speaker, so there is nothing more futile than an attempt of this sort that fails. A successful retort must be short, simple and so obviously to the point that every one can recognise the hit in an instant. A clear, incisive voice is needed, and a man must be able to select just the right moment when to fire his shot.

And of course in Parliament a man must have regard to the rules of order, especially those concerning the use of Parliamentary language. One has often to be satisfied with thinking things there that could be said with advantage and effect elsewhere.

The most telling interpolation of this sort that I can remember having heard in the House of Commons came from Mr. Tim Healy about twenty-five years ago. It was during the fierce debates on the second Home Rule Bill in 1893, on one of the very rare occasions when Mr. Gladstone had allowed himself to be persuaded to go home and rest. As he was away some of his followers allowed themselves to display a little more independence than they showed in his presence. Mr. Chamberlain was far too keen a debater not to perceive, and to make use of such an incident, and he taunted these gentlemen with their newly found courage in the absence of their great leader. Pointing at them derisively, he exclaimed, "When the cat's away the mice may play"—"and the rats" shot in Tim Healy. Even so cool and fearless a debater as Mr. Chamberlain started and flushed. He had but a short time before left one party and joined another, and the immemorial description in Parliament for a man who changes sides, however conscientiously, is "rat." In this case, as the reader will perceive, the retort was short, sharp and shot in just at the right moment—and it was one that could be appreciated in a flash by every one.

I have heard of an even shorter retort that made quite as much sensation, perhaps a little more because it was so terribly out of order.

Mr. Goschen (afterwards Lord Goschen) was speaking, when from the Strangers' Gallery came the expressive syllable, "Bosh!" It was no good pretending not to hear it, for every one heard it. And it would have been out of order even had it come from a member on the floor—but the offence was magnified tenfold by the fact that this contribution to the debate was offered by a stranger. I have mentioned the affair because of the curious sequel. The interrupter was that very gifted man Dr. Wallace (who hated to be called "Dr."), and he was, of course, turned out of the House. At the next General Election he stood against Mr. Goschen in Edinburgh, and turned him out—almost a unique instance of the tit-for-tat process. Dr. Wallace contributed some far better things to debate than a shout of "Bosh"—notably when he described a group of members who were supposed to be hungering and thirsting after titles and rewards, as consisting of "the benighted and the to-be-knighted." But he was once paid back in his own coin by a Welsh member who, resenting some ridicule that the learned Scotchman had aimed at the Welsh language, retorted that after all it was a language, whereas Scotch was only an accent.

There are retorts heard sometimes in the House of Lords, but as a rule they differ entirely in style from the vigorous interruptions heard

in the Commons. On one occasion a noble lord declared that Bishop Atterbury was always posing as a prophet, and then the noble lord added that the Bishop reminded him of the furious prophet Balaam, who was rebuked by his own ass. This was too good a chance for the Bishop to miss, and he replied, "Since the noble lord has discovered in our manners such a similitude, I am well content to be compared to the prophet Balaam; but, my lords, I am at a loss how to make out the other part of the parallel. I am sure that I have been reproved by nobody but his lordship." It was an excellent retort for the serene atmosphere of the House of Lords—but I doubt if it would have taken on during a stormy interchange of opinion in the Commons. They prefer something more of the cut-and-thrust style there.

Occasionally, however, ministers have indulged in retorts in the Commons quite as polished and urbane as any ever heard in the House of Lords. There was one occasion in 1848 when Sir Robert Peel (not at the moment in office, but one of the recognised leaders in the House) saved the Assembly from what might have been an ugly scene by his happy readiness in inoffensive retort. Some one had accused Feargus O'Connor of being a Republican, and that gentleman denied the charge, adding

roughly that he did not care whether the Queen or the Devil sat on the throne. There were signs of resentment, but Peel smoothed things over by remarking, with a courtly bow, "When the honourable gentleman sees the sovereign of his choice on the throne in these realms, I hope he will enjoy, and I feel sure he will deserve, the confidence of the Crown." That has always appeared to me to be a perfect retort—couched as it was in the best Parliamentary style, and so applied as to allay a storm that was just about to rage.

Strangers looking on at Parliamentary proceedings may often wonder why Ministers when being heckled at question time abstain from indulging in retort, though sometimes they have obvious opportunities of scoring. The explanation in many cases is that Ministers are as a rule anxious that business shall proceed smoothly and quickly, and they know that any indulgence in retort is apt to stir up more questions, and to ruffle members' temper. Now and then, however, a Minister will get in a neat one. I remember that that persistent heckler Mr. Galloway Weir one afternoon asked a great many questions of the Scottish Secretary in a Conservative Government as to why a certain gentleman had been made a Fishery Commissioner. The answer was that the gentleman had a thorough knowledge of the requirements

and the duties of the fishermen, who all had complete confidence in him. Mr. Weir growled out in reply, "You appoint him because he's a Tory!" The Conservative Minister smiled quite sweetly as he retorted, "Well, I did not think it necessary to mention that particular illustration of his general good sense"—a way of putting it that made Mr. Weir sit up and look thoughtful, and, what is more remarkable, it silenced him for a time.

Very similar to jokes and retorts in Parliament are the verbal slips and blunders, known as "bulls," unconscious lapses that may be witnessed and enjoyed in all public assemblies where men debate. It would, of course, be very easy to compile a list of what are known as "parliamentary bulls" from old records in which are enshrined the classic sayings of Sir Boyle Roche and others. It is my intention, however, to refer only to those that have been contributed in my time and that have obviously been honestly blundered into by various speakers. At the outset let me say that I can remember only one genuine specimen of what is known as a Spoonerism—and it was very effective. An indignant member wound up a telling speech by making a withering allusion to "the occupants of the Front Bench opposite"—at least that is what he intended to say. As a matter of fact, instead of saying "Front Bench,"

he said "the Frent Bunch opposite," and in an instant all the effect of his speech had gone, and he sat down amid a roar of laughter, which he no doubt regarded as ill-timed and even indecent levity. It is impossible to explain away a slip of that sort—all that the victim can do is to look the difficulty in the face, and pass on.

It is said that even so accurate and self-possessed a speaker as Mr. Asquith was once betrayed into a Spoonerism—but not in the House of Commons. He was making an important declaration about the policy of his party, and he asserted with unusual energy that they would not surrender one jot or one tittle of their principles. Unfortunately he said "one tot or one jittle." It spoiled the effect of an impressive sentence—but no one dared to laugh. Indeed, it is said that no one has ever had the courage to remind Mr. Asquith of what is probably a unique slip of the tongue in his long career as a public speaker.

As I have said, Spoonerisms are very rare in the House of Commons, so far as I can remember, but I have heard many a slip or bull, and they have done much to enliven debate and to relieve the tedium of Parliamentary life. I remember a young member ending a rather heated speech in this way : "And now I hope, sir, that I have made it clear to gentlemen

THE AUTHOR'S DAUGHTER WITH "STAR."

opposite that we who sit on this side of the House are not quite such fools as we look." It is not easy to comment on such a declaration without being impolite, for if you agree or disagree you are bound to reflect either on the appearance or the intelligence of the gentlemen in question.

There is a legend to the effect that nearly all "bulls" are contributed by Irish members, but that is not so. They do not contribute more than their share, and the House is indebted to members from all parts of the kingdom, and belonging to all parties, for providing gems of this sort. I heard a most respectable old English baronet once say, when rejoicing over the progress that had been made in dealing with a measure in which he was interested, "And now, sir, that we have cleared all the barbed-wire fences, it is to be hoped we are in smooth water at last." And it was a particularly bright Welsh member who surprised the House by declaring, "We are only following in the footsteps of those who are coming after us." But it was certainly an Irish gentleman who described Dublin Castle as being "just iron-bound in red-tape." And another enlivened the House during a South African War debate by asking, "Is it fair, sir, that we should have our boys killed at the front and then expect them to live on sixpence a day when they come back?" On the other hand,

it was an English member who, when enlarging on a bull perpetrated by an Irishman, added that he could remember "a more pregnant bull even than that!"

These slips or bulls are occasioned sometimes by mere confusion of thought, and at other times by mixing up metaphors and similes. To the first category belongs the old, old remark about it being impossible for a man to be in two places at once unless he's a bird. There we have confusion of thought, mental blundering pure and simple. And with regard to the other sort, one of the finest specimens ever heard in the House of Commons was uttered by a member who was attacking the Irish Land League, declaring that subscriptions were falling off, and that economy had to be practised. This was how he put it—"But, sir, the well is running dry, and they think that by putting in the pruning-knife they will bring more grist to the mill." After this the performance of another member who implored the House not to take some "white elephant under its wing" hardly merits notice, and the same may be said of the scornful remark that "the gentlemen sitting opposite are conspicuous by their absence."

As a rule, it is not wise for a member to try to correct one of these slips. Very often he is not conscious of what he has said to make his hearers laugh, but sometimes he sees his mistake, and

in attempting to put it right he makes another. Thus I remember something said by a rather confident and consequential member during an all-night sitting, just about the time when members are not quite sure, or are apt to forget, whether one day has ended and the next has begun. His first remark was, "At this late hour of last night," and then, when members laughed, he added impatiently, "Well, of course, I mean at this early hour of to-morrow morning." The members laughed again, and he was annoyed. One member whom I know very well, who is supposed by some to have perpetrated a bull, is suspected by others of being quite well aware of what he was saying. As he was speaking, the Home Secretary (Mr. Akers-Douglas) shook his head at some statement. My hon. friend remarked: "The Home Secretary shakes his head, and I'm sorry to hear it." But there can be no doubt that Sir Richard Cross was not trying to be funny when he said with some indignation, "I hear a smile."

Of course, the pleasing effect of a bull is increased if the member who makes the slip is being, or is attempting to be, vastly impressive and solemn at the moment. Thus there was uproarious delight in the House when a rather pompous gentleman, in making one of those "I told you so" speeches so dear to some men, wagged his forefinger and said, "When this

proposal was first made a short time ago I warned honourable gentlemen that a red herring was being drawn across the trail. Yes, and to-night, sir, that herring has come home to roost." I believe that to this day that worthy man wonders why his hearers laughed. Another scornful member raised a laugh quite unintentionally when he denounced some thing or other as being " so antediluvian as to be worthy of the Middle Ages ! "

One does not expect to hear this sort of thing in the House of Lords, for " bulls " are often the outcome of heated and impetuous oratory, and the style most in evidence in the House of Lords is sedate and serene. But I did once hear a most delicious bull in a House of Lords speech. The late Lord Londonderry was speaking, and was criticising an Education Bill that had been introduced in the other House by Mr. Birrell. The noble marquis gave it as his opinion that the Bill did not express the real views of Mr. Birrell, but had been forced on the Minister by the extremists of his party. Then came the bull, delivered with portentous solemnity : " My Lords, this is a case of the tail wagging the dog—instead of the head wagging it." Even the peers laughed aloud, and so did the peeresses in their galleries—the effect being heightened by the look of polite bewilderment on the face of Lord Londonderry. But even the greatest men

have tripped and slipped and blundered into bulls. Edmund Burke himself on one occasion said that when a man on one side got up half the members left, and when another rose to answer another half left, and then added, "a third gentleman follows their example, and rids the House of another half." At this there was great laughter, and Burke took the right line at once by saying, "Sir, I take the blunder to myself, and confess my satisfaction at having said anything that can put the House in good humour." That is the more excellent way; but too often a man in such a case fails to see why the others laugh, or if he does see, shows petulance or annoyance.

CHAPTER XVII

BORROWERS

BEFORE I became a member of Parliament I thought that my eighteen years' close association with the life of the House had taught me all that could be learnt about the life of a member as such. I had not long been elected, however, before I was taught by experience things I did not know before. There were curious and repeated requests for a little temporary assistance made by men who called on me in London, saying that they came from Stockport, but I am now convinced that not one of them had anything to do with that town. Some years ago a member of Parliament felt constrained to tell his constituents blandly that though he had the honour of representing them in the House that distinction did not carry with it the duties and responsibilities of being a relieving officer. In these days I believe it is seldom necessary for any member to address such a reminder to his supporters, and I can say truthfully that I have no reason to complain of any such attentions from the people of

Stockport. But I soon found out that any member who lives in London and represents a constituency about a couple of hundred miles away is liable to applications from a particular sort of cadger. This is the man who says he comes from the member's constituency, that he is for the moment stranded in London, and wants to borrow his railway fare in order to get home. In many cases these applicants are ingenious Cockneys, who have never seen the constituency from which they pretend to come, but, in spite of that, they are often successful.

Let me give one or two illustrations of how this game has been played on me.

Four or five years ago a very plausible man called at my house, and, having declared that he came from Stockport, said he was anxious to have my advice, adding at once that he was not going to ask for money, an assurance that gave me considerable relief. This was his tale —he had a dear wife and two or three darling little children, and his wife had for some weeks been terribly depressed. At last my visitor discovered that this unhappy woman was being blackmailed by a wicked sailor who had married her years previously, had disappeared, and was supposed to be dead. The man who called on me had not heard about the sailor's existence until a few days before coming to me, and now the question was—what was to be done ?

I was a little puzzled by his seeking my advice, as I am not a lawyer; but as I was told that the abandoned mariner had been rash enough to write letters saying quite bluntly that unless money was sent to keep his mouth shut he would have the woman charged with bigamy, I pointed out that the man could be arrested for trying to get money by means of threats. That was a very serious offence, while the bigamy affair would in the circumstances described be looked on as only a technical breach of the law.

I told him also that he need only go to any magistrate in Stockport, or to the excellent Chief Constable there, show the incriminating letters, and the evil-minded sailor would be arrested in a very short time, and I added that my name could be mentioned if that would in any way help the cause of justice. Indeed, I advised the anxious inquirer to return to Stockport at once and set the law in motion, not only in the interests of his wife and himself, but also for the sake of the community.

My visitor seemed very grateful for this quite elementary information—and then came the real reason for his visit. In spite of his assurance at the outset that he did not want money, he eventually "borrowed" the railway fare to Stockport, a town that I dare say he had not then, and has not now, ever seen.

This little interview took place in the morning, and later in the day I went to the House of Commons. One of the watchful constables who guard the way from the outer to the inner lobby, handed me one of the ordinary green cards that strangers send in, and he said, "This was left here yesterday, but we didn't trouble you about it as you wouldn't want to see that man."

I looked at the card, and saw on it the name of the unhappy husband who had told me his troubles in the morning.

So I said to the constable that I had seen that man earlier in the day at my house, and the constable said anxiously, "I hope he didn't get anything out of you." I owned to having advanced a railway fare to Stockport, and the constable said quite reproachfully, "He has nothing to do with Stockport—did he tell you a sad tale about his dear little wife being blackmailed by a wicked sailor?" I had to own that this was just what he had told me, and then my official friend exclaimed, "Oh, dear, dear—why, he's been telling that tale for years!"

It was all too evident that I had been victimised, and so I went away to the Terrace to think about things. I sat down by two distinguished members—one a very famous lawyer and the other a singularly fine type of the British baronet—and I told them my experience.

I thought the tale interesting, but they were evidently more than interested by it, they were fascinated. At last the baronet remarked, "That fellow had me with the same tale only a few days ago—I let him have a guinea or so."

That comforted me somewhat, but I was amazed to find that the same artist had imposed on the famous lawyer also. It is true that the lawyer had not given money, as he said he never did that without inquiries, but he had entirely believed the tale about the sailor and bigamy and blackmail, and had written quite elaborate instructions, telling his visitor what to do. So here were three members of the House, meeting quite accidentally, and each of us had been performed on by this amusing scamp. I wonder how many other victims he had in the House. Perhaps he is still telling the tale —indeed, I hope he is.

What made the case more interesting was this fact—the three of us represented constituencies in counties widely remote from each other, but the fellow used the dialect and pronunciation of each with surprising accuracy. I had been impressed by that fact and so had both of my fellow-victims. These adventurers are very resourceful, and it is notorious that many wrong-doers show an amount of intelligence and put in as much hard work as would ensure success in any honest undertaking.

They generally provide themselves with a certain amount of information about their intended victim, obtained from works of reference, but now and then, in spite of every precaution they come to grief unexpectedly. I have shown how I fell into a trap on one occasion to the real distress of the friendly constable. Let me now mention a case when I scored.

An extremely gushing and well-disposed man called on me one morning, and I can only presume that he meant to lead up to a loan, for the interview was cut short abruptly before he could submit the main question. At the outset he said, "I believe you were at Woodhouse Grove School, near Leeds, about the year so-and-so"—and I assented. Then he went on in a breezy manner as he rubbed his hands. "You must have been there with my brother; he's often talked about you, and has said how every one knew you would succeed in life."

This made me a little suspicious, as that was not the view entertained about me either by my schoolfellows or masters, as I have shown in an earlier chapter. So I said that I did not remember the name of the boy in question, but as it was a large school, and as I was there seven years when changes were constantly taking place, and many years had passed since I left, the name might easily have been forgotten.

My warm-hearted visitor quite agreed, though he added that there could not be any mistake, and that his brother had always thought kindly of me.

It was at this point that I managed to bowl out this plausible humbug.

I asked casually what had been his father's trade or profession, and was told that the father had been a managing engineer in a big works in Leeds. Then I said, as if it was a point of no particular importance, "I suppose your brother was not a stepbrother with a different father," and was assured that the brother was also the son of the respectable managing engineer.

And now for once I was able to score.

I rose and said, "There is one thing that you have not been able to get out of any work of reference. That school at that time, and for years later, was reserved strictly for the sons of Wesleyan ministers, and no son of an engineer would have been admitted."

I am bound to say that my visitor did the best thing he could do in the circumstances. He took up his hat, said "Good morning," and left quickly. It was a case that could not be explained away, and like a wise general he saw that retreat was the only possible course—so he retreated with as much dignity as he could assume. Thus I never had the advantage of really knowing the object of his visit—but that

elaborate opening about his brother, and the old school, and the warm admiration that brother had for me, all suggest that he was leading up to some larger demand than a railway fare.

I remember with much satisfaction how I eluded the net of the fowler on another occasion. Here again my visitor was breezy and friendly, hailing me with a hearty "Good morning, Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes"—and I may say that gentlemen of this sort nearly always give me my full name. When I had returned his salutation with less enthusiasm than he had shown, he said with a beaming smile that he supposed I did not remember him, and I admitted almost apologetically that it was so. He went on to say with undiminished gush that he had seen me often when I was in Southport, and had worked hard for me there, but so far from being offended at not being remembered he handsomely admitted that at election time a candidate was so busy that he might well overlook some of his humbler but most zealous workers. I agreed—but I noticed that he had used the word "Southport" as my constituency, and by this time I was getting wary. It occurred to me that if I had pointed out that my place was Stockport he would have said at once that of course it was a slip of the tongue when he said Southport, that he was surprised at his

mistake, and that of course he meant Stockport —or "good old Stockport" as it is called by many of these beggars who have never seen it. So I determined to pin him to Southport, and talked about the sea there, about a handsome thoroughfare named, I think, Lord Street, about the Mayor (I knew he would have been looking up local details in some directory), and above all I mentioned my friend, Sir George Pollard, M.P., who lived there. At each reminder the expectant gentleman became more and more enthusiastic. He agreed that no one who knew Southport would ever forget it, or would ever forget my brilliant fight there when I won, thanks in some degree to his humble efforts— "though he said it who should not"—efforts, he added, that would be repeated whenever they were needed. The look of happy confidence left his face when I told him coldly that I had visited Southport only once in my life, had spent but one night there, in order to address a meeting, and that neither he nor any one else had ever worked for me there, nor was there any reason why any one should, seeing that I had no more to do with the representation of Southport than had the man in the moon. In this, as in the previous case, the object of the visit had not been revealed, so I could not accuse him of begging or of trying to get money by deceit, as he had not asked for any. Indeed,

I did not accuse him of anything, and the subsequent proceedings interested us no more. The offensive had been beaten back by a counter-attack. He left after having said once more "Good morning," and this time the salutation was not returned. But probably he had come to borrow a railway fare to Southport, and I may say that this railway fare trick is still being played with a good deal of success.

One of the newest members of the House was approached for this purpose by three or four men before he had been in the House one month. His constituency is a long way off, and so he is more likely to attract this sort of applicant than is some one whose constituency is near, as the greater the distance the better it is for financial transactions of this sort. But now and then you will come across a man who, while he thinks he has a claim on any member of Parliament, will be satisfied with a very small amount.

Years ago, long before I was a member, there was a curious old man who haunted the outer Lobby, and who was very much concerned about the impending doom of this Empire—and, indeed, of the world in general. I saw him waiting about one night, and found out that he wanted to talk to some member of Parliament—he did not care who the member was.

So I went in, found out a good-hearted

member, Sir Frederick Wilson, and persuaded him to come out in order to talk to a very remarkable and interesting character. Out came the honourable gentleman, and immediately the old man began to rave away about the end of the world and all sorts of terrible things. The member stood it for about five minutes, and then, having fished in his pocket, he said suddenly, " Well, here's a bob."

The old man took the trifle, cheered up famously, and strutted away quite jauntily to spend the shilling before the world ended. I never saw a greater change more quickly produced by so small a gift.

CHAPTER XVIII

TRAGEDY AND FARCE

IT has never fallen to my lot, and I am thankful that it has been so, to take any part in sensational journalistic work. But of course any man who has been mixed up with daily journalism for more than twenty-five years must have had experiences that are unusual though possibly not exciting. Thus, while I am pleased to say I have never been required to see a man hanged, I did on one occasion, and on one only, see a man sentenced to death. It was at Chelmsford in 1894 that I had to attend the trial of a man named James Canham Read, and the case was made interesting to me by more than one circumstance. It was the first case in which Frank Lockwood appeared to prosecute as one of the law officers of the Crown, and it was one of the last cases tried before that most stately of judges, Baron Pollock. There were many sordid details and much necessary but boring formality that I found very wearisome, but one or two incidents remain vividly impressed on my memory. Thus I

remember that the prisoner glared so savagely at a young woman witness that she was put behind a screen so that she could see the judge and jury, but could not be terrorised by the man in the dock. But what I remember chiefly was an incident when Baron Pollock was summing up in grave and solemn tones, and while being scrupulously impartial and judicial, it was quite evident to any one of intelligence that he was closing every avenue of escape that might have seemed open to the prisoner. Though it was winter-time, in December, the court-house was very hot, and the windows were open, and suddenly, about noon, the judge's solemn tones were interrupted by the laughter and screams of children who had just been released from some neighbouring school, and I saw the prisoner start as he heard those shouts of innocence and joy. I thought of Hood's lines about the boys who came romping out of school, who played about "like troutlets in a pool," while Eugene Aram sat remote from all, a melancholy man. And it struck me that possibly the murderer in the dock was thinking, as he saw his fate being made certain, of days when he had been young and carelessly happy. Indeed, I moralised on this in a sketch I was writing for a London paper. A year or two later I saw in a novel, written after the Chelmsford trial, a similar incident introduced,

and I thought, and still think, that the novelist must have seen my sketch and was indebted to me for what he worked up into quite an effective passage.

I noticed, too, that when the prisoner had been sentenced, and had walked to the back of the dock to go down to the cells he suddenly turned back to pick up a little piece of lead pencil with which he had been taking notes and which he had forgotten. It struck me as strange that a man at such a time should be so anxious about a trifle of that sort. It happened, also, that the wife of a distinguished journalist, who had obtained a seat in court, went to sleep when the jury were considering their verdict, and she was very much annoyed when she found that she had missed the climax of the trial. Indeed, it looked as if she thought the return of the verdict and the sentence of death ought to have been repeated for her benefit. The trial lasted three or four days, and I found at the hotel where I stopped more than one man who made it a habit of attending murder trials, and had seen dozens of men sentenced to death, apparently enjoying such spectacles—as curious a sort of taste as I have ever known.

Having mentioned that most attractive man, Frank Lockwood, let me describe a second occasion on which I was to some extent associated with him, another experience showing that the

monotony of daily journalism is sometimes relieved by quaint adventures. It happened that some years ago—possibly fifteen or sixteen—there was a Dutch gentleman who made himself prominent in London by flinging stones or bricks through the windows of the Home Office. Sometimes he favoured the offices of other Departments with these attentions, but he was generally true to the Home Office.

The breaking of these windows was not an end in itself, but was intended to be a means to an end, and what the gentleman really wanted to do was to attract public attention to a grievance or a theory. He was convinced that lunacy was distressingly prevalent in this country, and was rapidly increasing. He wrote and wrote again to the Government of that day, but the Government—I may say, by the way, that it was a Tory Government—took no notice of his warnings, possibly thinking that any interference with such a state of things would be suicidal.

Then the Dutch gentleman demanded that Mr. Arthur Balfour should be arrested and charged with high treason, as one who had wilfully neglected the true interests of the realm after repeated warnings. The various magistrates to whom the Dutch gentleman applied for a summons or warrant against Mr. Balfour declined to act, and so, in the opinion of the Dutch gentleman, there was only one thing for

it—a brick through the Home Office window, and the brick duly arrived.

After these performances had gone on for some little time, it occurred to me that it might be well in the public interest (and also in my own private interests) if I were to interview the gentleman and find out what it was all about. So one evening I looked him up in his lodgings, in order to have a real heart-to-heart talk about things.

Before I saw him, his landlady, a good motherly body, besought me not to excite him, adding that he was really a very nice gentleman, but that he was so concerned about this lunacy business that had it not been for her determination that he should eat a good dinner at night, she feared he would have starved—though he was by no means a poor man.

I promised to be quite discreet, and was then shown into the room of the Dutchman. He was a gentleman of education, and we talked for some time about pictures and books, and about these things he knew more than I knew—which is, perhaps, not saying much. Then at last, with delicacy, and even with cunning, I approached the real topic—the growth of lunacy in this country—and at once I noticed that he was on his guard, and became watchful and suspicious.

He ventured the remark that I must have seen evidences of lunacy in the population gener-

ally, and I said he was quite right, adding that I had met and talked with lunatics more than once. This encouraged him, and led him to produce a map he had prepared—a map of Great Britain—showing, by means of shading, the comparative amount of lunacy existing in different districts. Directly I saw that map I was overjoyed, for it happened that the areas shaded most darkly, and therefore most afflicted by lunacy, chanced to be the parts of the country in which the Tory Party had done best at the General Election that had just taken place.

So I declared that his map was a very valuable public document, and that it ought to be published—and asked that I might have his permission to reproduce it in the Press. He gave that permission with the air of a monarch conferring the Order of the Garter, and after a few more interchanges of civility I left. He came into the passage of the house to bid me farewell, and there the gravely courteous nature of the proceedings was rudely upset.

For the front door was opened from outside with a latch-key by a couple of merry medical students who also lodged in the house, and directly they saw my Dutch friend they hailed him boisterously, saying, "Hallo, my old Trojan! Had any sport to-day? Have you pulled the Lord Chancellor's nose, or broken any more windows?"

It was embarrassing, and I slipped off, carrying that precious map with me. It was duly reproduced in the Press, with thoughtful comments, showing that just as Mr. Gladstone once declared that crime dogged the footsteps of the Land League, so lunacy and Tory electoral successes followed each other as the night the day.

Having scored my little success, I fear I forgot the Dutchman for a time. He became quieter, but just as a volcano that has ceased to be violently active spits out lava and stones now and then before it becomes extinct, so the Dutch gentleman occasionally sent a brick through a window to indicate that he was still concerned about lunacy, and was still of opinion that Mr. Balfour was a traitor.

It happened, therefore, some months later that after one of these incidents my esteemed contemporary the *Daily Telegraph* alluded to the brick-thrower as a "lunatic." This was too much for the Dutchman, and he immediately began an action against the *Daily Telegraph* for libel; and the paper concerned, remembering my interview with the plaintiff, called me as a witness to testify as to whether I thought the gentleman was really quite sane.

I was immensely flattered at being thus regarded as an expert, and I observed that Sir Frank Lockwood (then Mr. Lockwood) was

retained for the *Telegraph*. In those days I used to see that learned and genial gentleman almost daily in the Lobby of the House of Commons, and I am still proud to be able to say that he and I were friends. So I mentioned this case to him a few days before the trial, told him that I was to appear as an expert witness in regard to lunacy, and I still remember his hearty pat on the back as he replied, no doubt meaning to be kind, "No better choice could be made, my boy."

Then I showed him the map, and explained all about the increase in lunacy and the success of the Tory Party. Sir Frank, as a good Liberal, was delighted, and I am sure he would not object to my revealing the following innocent little manœuvre. He said that as he might have to question me about the map we might as well prepare a few little jokes—question and answer, retort and counter-retort, and so on; and we did so. Had these "impromptu" flashes ever been witnessed I am sure they would have dazzled the Court, and entranced all the readers who saw them in the papers—for they would most assuredly have been reported and published. There would have been glancing and merry allusions to Mr. Balfour—nothing offensive, of course, but a little playful badinage.

Then the day came for the trial, and I went to the court.

After waiting for about half an hour, I was told that the case would not be reached that day, so, after pocketing two guineas for my trouble, "I home, with great content of mind," as Pepys has it.

On the next day the case was reached, and the counsel for the Dutchman—a junior, and a very able man whose name I forget—opened the case, and opened it very powerfully. He enlarged on the fact that his client was a stranger in a strange land, that he was obscure and unknown, and though by no means a pauper, yet his resources were as a drop in the bucket when compared with the vast wealth at the back of the *Daily Telegraph*. That paper, he declared, was one of the most powerful journals in the world, and he invited the jury to contemplate the unhappy lot of an unknown Dutchman here in England being branded as a lunatic by this great newspaper that was read in every household in the kingdom.

It was quite evident that the honest jury were beginning to be impressed.

Some of them may have thought that if this sort of thing was allowed to go on unchecked even they might be described as lacking in sanity by some unbridled ruffian of the Press. And then when the plaintiff was examined by his counsel he made a very good show. He talked as rationally as he had talked to me about

pictures and books, and the jury seemed to be growing more and more sympathetic. Sir Frank Lockwood therefore saw that he must do his utmost, and he resolved that this was a case for fun—and fun was his forte.

So when he took our Dutch friend in hand he soon led him on from one absurdity to another, so that the court echoed and re-echoed with laughter. With the utmost art Sir Frank induced the plaintiff to admit that according to his theories the jury might not be altogether sane, and to express something like a doubt as to the soundness of the mind of his lordship on the Bench. Before this triumphant cross-examination had gone on long I began to fear that what did happen might happen. The jury said they had heard enough—and stopped the case, finding for the defendant.

I am sure that justice was done, and that the *Daily Telegraph* deserved the verdict; but what about all those carefully arranged impromptus that the distinguished counsel and my humble self had prepared? They were lost, and the public will never know or appreciate how much was lost.

I may add that the plantiff accepted his defeat in the greatest good humour. He made only one request—that he might be allowed to present a copy of his celebrated map to each of the jurymen; and the judge, a kindly man,

assented. The last I saw of my friend was when he was handing out these documents with a smile to the gentlemen who had decided that it was no libel to describe him as a lunatic—and in the end even the learned judge was good enough to accept a copy.

I know not whether the Dutchman is still in our midst, but if so I may repeat the assurance I gave him when we chatted together at his lodgings—there are lunatics about, and I have met some of them.

CHAPTER XIX

CLUBS

DR. JOHNSON divided men into two classes, the clubable and the unclubable, and I hope I may fairly claim to belong to the first of the two. And it happens that one of the clubs to which I belong and which I have found the most interesting of all is the Johnson Club, founded on 13th December 1884, just one hundred years after his death. I am not one of the original members, as I did not live in London in 1884, but I have been a member for more than twenty years. The number of members is now limited to thirty-one, but I believe at one time the number was twenty-six, as is the case with prelates in the House of Lords. There is no other resemblance between the two bodies of men, except that the invaluable Scribe of the Club, Mr. J. F. Green, has a remarkable cranial and facial likeness to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Johnson Club held its first gatherings at the old Cock Tavern in Fleet Street, since pulled down and superseded by the Law Courts' branch of the

Bank of England—a singular transformation. At different times the suppers and discussions have been held in many places, the Cheshire Cheese, Simpson's, the Salisbury Hotel, as well as at Oxford, Cambridge, Lichfield, Bath, and once, I remember, we went to either the Jack Straw's Castle or the Spaniards, I forget which, on Hampstead Heath, so that the greatest of our circle, Dr. Birkbeck Hill, could attend, as he felt no longer equal to coming down into town late at night. There is a legend to the effect that the Club left the Cheshire Cheese because the waiters would join in the discussions. The members were too democratic to object to that, but what they did resent was the fact that the waiters used contumelious phrases about the great man to whose pious memory we still drink in silence at every meeting.

After thus wandering from place to place we have at last found a fitting home in Dr. Johnson's house, 17 Gough Square—a house in which he lived for ten years, from 1748 to 1758, where he wrote *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, produced *The Rambler*, and compiled the greater part of the *Dictionary*. The long room at the top of the house, known as the Dictionary attic, is the room in which the suppers are now held under the old timber beams and rafters beneath which he toiled. Only a very few years ago, in 1911, Mr. Cecil

Harmsworth bought the place, and thus saved it from collapse, as it was in a miserable state of decay and squalor, with leaking roof and tottering walls. It was restored under the direction of Mr. Alfred Burr, an architect both skilful and sympathetic, and to-day the Johnson Club meets there with the readily granted permission of Mr. Cecil Harmsworth. Nor is that all, for Mr. Harmsworth is anxious that any one interested in the place should visit it, examine the different rooms and their contents, and climb the stout staircase with its sound old unpainted pinewood balustrade.

One of the best-known tales connected with the Club is told by Mr. Birrell, whose presence is always welcomed there, even as his too frequent absence is deplored. According to the tale, Bonnor, the huge Australian cricketer, was a guest one night, and when called on to speak he confessed, with the manly simplicity that befits a giant, that until that night he had never heard of Dr. Johnson. Some one laughed or gasped, and Bonnor added as if in reply, "Yes, and what is more, I come from a great country where you might ride a horse sixty miles a day for three months and never meet anybody who had. But I have heard of him now, and can only say that were I not Bonnor the cricketer I would be Samuel Johnson."

The sturdy Doctor would have loved the gigantic cricketer for that splendid tribute.

I am conscious that this tale has appeared in print more than once, and I reproduce it here in order to lead up to another tale, similar though perhaps not so good, concerning an incident which I witnessed. We had journeyed to Bath to be present at the unveiling of a tablet placed on a house once occupied by Mrs. Piozzi, and at our supper afterwards we had several local guests. Many speeches were delivered; indeed, I believe all present with one exception, a local alderman, had spoken, and as we thought it would be invidious to leave him out, he was invited to say a few words. He did, and began by remarking thoughtfully that until that night he had never understood that "this man Johnson" was supposed to be an interesting person. We all cheered, and being thus encouraged the alderman went on to say with grave deliberation, "I did once try to read *Boswell's Life*, but I could not get on with it." This confession, equal in manly simplicity and candour to that of Bonnor the Great, was rapturously applauded, and the alderman, once more encouraged and inspired, then made this memorable declaration, "Indeed, to tell you the truth, I thought Boswell's stuff was infernal rot from beginning to end." I have heard tempests of cheering in the House of Commons,

but never anything equal to the tornado of applause that acclaimed the triumph of the alderman, and he sat down amid enthusiastic assurances that he had made the speech of the evening. And it was so, though we had been addressed by Dr. Birkbeck Hill, the mightiest of all Johnsonians, who knew more about Johnson than Johnson knew about himself.

Let me pass to another club, very different from that of which I have been writing—the Saturday Field Club, which no longer exists. Many of its members belonged to the Press Gallery, but there were others—members of the civil service and men in different branches of trade. We were supposed to take walks on Saturday afternoons and to commune with nature, but our detractors said that our "walks" consisted of travelling by omnibus or tram or train. Indeed, it was asserted that we had journeyed on almost every sort of vehicle that moves on wheels, including a hearse and a brewer's dray. One legend about the Club was that the longest walk the members ever performed was from the National Liberal Club, then at the corner of Whitehall Place, to the adjoining Charing Cross Station on the District Railway. This was a slander, but I am bound to confess that when the members started off on one occasion to walk from the National Liberal Club to visit the Black Museum at

Scotland Yard, which could be reached easily in five minutes, we stopped half-way to call on a friend at a flat in Whitehall Court and rested there for an hour. But we did sometimes walk a fair distance, once, for instance, from Gravesend to Rochester, visiting Dickens' house at Gad's Hill. I remember the room in the house which was lined with books from floor to ceiling, and even the inside of the door was so cunningly covered with dummy volumes that when it was shut a stranger could not tell where the door was. Dickens had shown his humour in the titles, for there were ten fat volumes entitled, *Five Minutes in China, by a Traveller.* And what interested some of us even more were several volumes on *How to Obtain Sleep, or Reports of Parliament,* and they were bound in exact imitation of the real thing. Dickens knew from experience what Parliamentary reporting is, and its sleep-inducing effect.

It was while on that walk that I heard of a charming incident in connection with the Press Gallery that deserves to be made public, as it reflects credit on all concerned. Two of those present were connected with, and were indeed commercially responsible for, the official reporting at that time. What I am about to relate has nothing to do with the present system, nor with the days when the *Times* undertook the official reports. Let me describe the two chief per-

formers in the adventure I am about to relate as A. and B. A short time before I met them they had been confronted by the embarrassing fact that unless they could raise about £250 within a day or two the publication of the reports for the next week would be in danger. Thereupon B. wrote to a gentleman living in the country about sixty miles from London, asking for temporary aid. A telegram came from the gentleman saying he would like to see the two the next morning, and as the message came at six in the evening there was only time enough to catch the last train down. So they went in a hurry, taking no luggage. Being hard pressed financially they naturally travelled first class, and when they reached the country town they of course put up at the best hotel. As they were strangers without luggage a deposit was asked for, and half a sovereign was handed over. Then came a good supper, bed, and in the morning an excellent breakfast on trout and other delicacies. Being thus refreshed they went confidently to the gentleman and so impressed him that a cheque for £250 was there and then sent off to their bankers in London. They returned to the hotel, had a little refreshment, and then the bill was politely presented. Now A. had as easy-going and lordly a way in regard to finance as had Mr. Micawber, and so he handed over the bill to B, saying, "You pay this and we'll settle

up afterwards." B. replied that he had no money, and A. was in the same plight; and as the bill came to £2. 12s. 6d., they were faced by a financial crisis. In such cases men and nations alike try to raise a loan, and the landlord was sent for, and B. opened the negotiations in what he intended to be a humorous style by saying, "You don't know me, sir, and if you did perhaps I should not ask you what I now ask you—will you lend me a fiver?" The landlord declined firmly and almost surlily, adding that he supposed this meant they could not pay their bill. This melancholy fact had to be admitted, but it was explained that the two had plenty of money in London, and would certainly send it along directly they had returned to town. The landlord said something about having been had that way before, but did not seem to be absolutely obdurate, and that encouraged B., who was of a sanguine nature, to make a further remark. He said that as the landlord had accepted a deposit of ten shillings and had seen fit to extend credit beyond that limit, the result was what in law is known as "a waver," and no more could be charged.

I remember hearing this tale told in the presence of a law officer of the Crown, and at this point that learned man remarked grimly—"A good joke possibly, but very bad law." However that may be the landlord said, "So I

suppose I'm up against a lawyer," and B. replied that though he was not a lawyer he heard laws being made, and he produced a card showing his name and giving as an address the Debates Room of the House of Commons. The unhappy landlord then asked anxiously, "Are you members of Parliament?" and showed evident relief when he was assured that they were not. In the end he agreed to let them go and to trust to them to send the money from town. It was then that B., in his most ingratiating manner, remarked that the summer heat was great, and that while they had return tickets to London, they had no cash. It happened that they had to change trains on the way to London, involving a wait of about a quarter of an hour, so that if the landlord would be good enough to return the ten shillings deposit it would be possible to get a reasonable amount of refreshment. The landlord's first remark was, "This beats all," but a moment later, muttering something about "in for a penny in for a pound," he handed back the half-sovereign and away went my two light-hearted friends.

And now for the sequel—a cheque for the bill was at once sent and was duly acknowledged, and both A. and B. had forgotten the incident, and had also forgotten the fact that they had left their cards with an intimation that if the landlord was ever in London with nothing

to do, and would call at the House they would try to do him a good turn. A few days later, as they were working in their room, the landlord's card was brought in. They welcomed their trusty and trustful friend who, as it chanced, had never before seen the inside of Parliament, and they put him for a short time in the Strangers' Gallery. Being a sensible man, he was soon satisfied with what he saw and heard there, and he was then taken through the House of Lords, which was not then sitting. There he was shown the Woolsack, and was seated on it, and before the bewildered man knew what he was doing he was induced to kneel down while either A. or B. knighted him, using an umbrella for a sword, and at last he was taken back to the Press Gallery part of the Commons for dinner, where he was handsomely entertained. Under the influence of this hospitality he mellowed, and explained that while he was only a simple provincial and his hosts were two smart London gentlemen, he had made money out of them.

These were the facts: when they had left him with an unpaid bill, and with, or rather without, the returned ten shillings, he told the tradesmen who used his hotel for what Pepys used to call the "morning draught," about the two gentlemen from town who had promised to pay their bill from London. The local butcher was of a sporting disposition, and he immediately

bet the landlord five pounds to one he would never be paid, and the bet was accepted. When the cheque arrived and was flourished in triumph by the landlord in the face of the butcher, there was another bet of one pound that the cheque would not be met. But it was met, and when the landlord left the Press dinner-table in the Commons he thanked the two distinguished journalists, not only for paying their bill, but also for enabling him to make six pounds in addition to the legitimate profit on that bill. As I have said, this tale does credit to all concerned—unless, indeed, the reader takes exception to the betting—and I hope it may encourage landlords in general to give credit to gentlemen of the Parliamentary Press on the very few occasions when such a favour may be necessary.

I will refer to but one other out-of-the-way and informal club of which I was a member years ago, known as the Exiles' Club, which used to meet in hostelries in or near to Fleet Street. The members were either Irish, Scottish, Welsh, or, as I and some others were described, "mongrels," that is, half and half. It was our amiable custom to find a pure-bred Englishman—sometimes there was difficulty in discovering one—and when caught he was entertained as a guest, and covered with insults in a speech proposing his health. The Englishman invariably accepted these attentions with the cheerful complacency characteristic of

the race. I have pleasant memories, also, of the old Vagabonds' Club, and the clearest of those recollections has to do with a great night when the then Bishop of London, Dr. Creighton, the least "bishop-y" of bishops, and his gifted wife were the chief guests. I remember wondering at the time what some of the Bishops of London of other days would have thought had they seen one of their followers in the great succession willingly and even joyously associating himself with self-confessed or avowed Vagabonds.

CHAPTER XX

FRIENDS OF MAN

A FEW years ago the late Professor Stuart produced a volume of reminiscences, and not the least interesting chapters in that book were concerned with dogs he had owned and loved. And quite recently I noticed with interest and pleasure that in Viscount Morley's *Recollections*, a great book dealing with great men and great affairs, and showing how history is made, some of the most moving passages have to do with his dogs. I happen to know that there are several photographs in existence showing John Morley with his dogs, petting or playing with them, and I wish those pictures could be published. The first time I saw John Bright was when I was a small lad, and that great man was bending down to stroke and pat a little dog on the platform of Rochdale railway station. Being thus encouraged by the examples set by eminent men, I have resolved to try to interest the reader in two dogs who have honoured me by their friendship—and more than friendship, their enthusiastic loyalty and affection. The

first was named " Star," and I decline to call him a mongrel, choosing rather to describe him as a cross-breed, a mixture of collie and Pomeranian. He was bought for seven-and-sixpence at the Battersea dogs' home by my wife, who selected him because of the imploring and almost imperious way in which he asked to be taken away from his surroundings. It was quite evident he knew that she had come to buy a dog, and he was determined she should have him. He was at that time about two years old, and I should say a Cockney dog, for though he seldom showed fear I remember how he bolted terror-stricken when he met a cow in a narrow road near Clapham Common, it being obviously the first time he had seen one.

I know that when men tell tales about their dogs those tales often excite scepticism, and so the reader may smile when I state that " Star " on one occasion jumped on a bus in Brixton, the right bus for his purpose, scrambled up to the top, and got off again at the stopping-place close to where we then lived in Dulwich, yet that is true. The tale may appear less incredible when all the facts are stated. My wife and daughter often took him to Brixton, and when returning by bus he was allowed to find a place under a seat on the top while they rode inside. On the day in question they went to the bus, but then, remembering some business that had

been overlooked, they turned back. The dog, not noticing this, took his accustomed place, and, knowing perfectly well when to get off, he came down at the right spot and went home. It was the conductor who told us the next day, adding, "He hopped on and hopped off again like a Christian." On another occasion he went up to the top of an old-fashioned bus which had an arrangement more like a ladder than a staircase leading to the top. He managed to get up with some difficulty, but he would not risk coming down the same way, so he ran to the front, jumped first on to the driver's footboard, then to the back of one of the horses, causing the horse to rear in alarm, and then to the ground, to the amusement of the friendly driver. I ought to add that all his bus-riding adventures were undertaken before the era of motor buses.

And now let me relate some exploits that showed more than the ordinary instinct and intelligence to be found in most dogs, and that gave evidence of power to think out a problem. There were shops in Clapham in which he might go in freely, and others where he had to be taken in on a "lead," and to this he objected. He soon learnt to distinguish between these places, and would always wait outside the second sort of shop, never making a mistake. There is nothing very remarkable in that, but soon he was confronted by something more difficult.

There was a very long shop in High Street, Clapham, known as Grice's Stores, with six or seven doors. My wife sometimes went in at the first door, and he waited outside. Then she went from one department to another, coming out perhaps at the other end of the building, forgetting that he was waiting. After a time he would go home alone, and this he disliked. He evidently thought over the business, and we soon noticed that in regard to this one shop he always crossed the road, taking his place on the pavement opposite so as to keep an eye on all the doors. I have known him do that scores of times, and it has always seemed to me to prove the possession of reasoning power and of calculation. He was not exactly a canine saint, and was rather too prone to fight, though he very seldom began a quarrel, but he acted on Shakespeare's advice, "Being in, bear it that the opposed may beware of thee." We had him for about a dozen years, and never once did he fail to show evidence of the most frantic loyalty and affection. At the end he was taken to the house of a kindly veterinary surgeon who understood and loved dogs, and the instructions were that if the dog was obviously suffering pain he should be humanely destroyed. There he lay for a few days in a warm room, and one day when my wife called to see how he was going on he recognised her footstep as she went upstairs, and

though too weak to move he welcomed her by two or three feeble beats of his tail on the floor, and so died. It was his farewell sign of affection. As I have said, he was what some call a mongrel, and was as smart and resourceful as are some of the children of the poor who are early forced to look after themselves.

My next dog was an aristocrat, a thoroughbred with a long-recorded pedigree, and was the most gentlemanly dog I ever knew. He was named "Blazes," a name that might suggest a wild or impetuous nature, but he was nothing of the sort. One of his ancestors was named "Blue Blazes" and another "Silver Blazes," names given because the animals were streaked or "blazed" in their colouring. His technical description was "a blue merle collie," but he could better be described as a silver-grey collie, a dog so handsome that whenever he was taken out people stopped to admire him, to ask about him, and to talk to him, attentions which he received with gracious dignity of bearing. My other dog "Star" had been notable for what may be called self-help, but the high-bred "Blazes" was in many respects helpless, though highly intelligent. For instance, if a piece of food was thrown to "Star" he would catch it unerringly, but "Blazes" would disdain to make any effort, would let the food hit him, and would look at you with an air of gentlemanly

reproach as if resenting a proceeding so vulgar. But he was as true and as faithful as the other, and here let me say that the remark made with parrot-like iteration about collies being treacherous and apt to snap at their friends perpetuates and passes on a pestilent heresy, and is, in my experience, absolutely untrue. We bought "Blazes" when he was a little pup that could be put in one's pocket. We had him for fifteen years—a long life for a collie—and never on any occasion was there a slip in his temper.

"Blazes" would not have been so able to take care of himself as was the sturdier "Star," but he knew his way about, and on one occasion he did us a remarkable service. My wife and I had been to a Royal Naval Review at Spithead, and arrived home about midnight, having told the servants not to sit up, but to leave the door so that it could be opened by a latch-key. By mistake they had bolted the door as well as leaving the catch of the Yale lock down. It was impossible to get at any window; indeed, a friendly policeman whom I consulted said I was fortunate in living in a house that was virtually burglar-proof. It was one of those Cubitt-built houses just out of Eccleston Square, splendidly and solidly built, but we knew all too well that no knocking or ringing could be heard by the servants, who were up five storeys high. But the dog slept in the passage, and my wife, opening

the letter-box slit, called him. He immediately gave a bark of welcome, but we knew again that even a loud and angry bark down there would not be heard by the servants, so my wife said to the dog, "Go upstairs, up, up, up"—and I could see "Blazes" with his head on one side thinking things out. In less than a minute he had grasped the situation. Upstairs he rushed, barking as if the house was on fire. The servants came down and our troubles were over.

Most dogs have some favourite form of food or refreshment. "Star" enjoyed tea—good strong tea—more than anything else, but "Blazes" preferred currant cake to all other food, except perhaps cheese, which I believe all dogs love. When we were safely in the house that night I said that the old dog should eat currant cake till he could eat no more, and he had all he wanted; nor was it an unreasonable amount, for he was never greedy. But what I remember best of all was the manner in which he walked about, picking up his feet in what in horses is known as "park action," and evidently pleased with himself, obviously feeling that he had done us some service and that we knew it.

In his last years "Blazes" became blind and deaf, but to the very end if I flicked a letter close to his ear he marched off to the front door, knowing that I was going to take him to the post. Once he mistook the noise made by crinkling a

THE AUTHOR WITH "BLAZES."

newspaper for this signal, and I immediately walked him off to the pillar-box, for I think a dog should never be deceived even by mistake.

Let me here add an incident told to me by my friend, Ernest Parke, about a dog at his farm in Warwickshire. It would sit by him at breakfast, steadily watching him so as to get an occasional scrap, but directly he folded up and put away his table-napkin the dog walked off as being no longer interested. One day Parke, being tired of the dog's earnest gaze, put away the napkin long before he had finished, and away went the dog. A minute or two later, when looking up from his paper, Parke saw that the dog had his head, very much to one side, just inside the door watching his master, and Parke told me that he was horribly ashamed of being thus detected by his old friend.

Perhaps I have said more about dogs than some people will welcome, and much as I love dogs I am not one of those who would pay attentions to them at the expense of little children, for the small human being has the first claim on us. But my affection for dogs, and for other members of the brute creation, such as horses, has taken me occasionally into the same lobby as that voted in by Sir Frederick Banbury, and in earlier years by Col. Lockwood, now Lord Lambourne, both of them sound friends and defenders of these faithful creatures.

I am told that Sir Frederick maintains in comfort many stable-veterans at his place in Wiltshire, and the fact makes me disposed to forgive him some of what I regard as his grave political heresies. And as to Col. Lockwood—as I always shall call him—I have been more than once to his place, Bishop's Hall in Essex, and seen him at home with his dogs. Once when I went there he had thirteen poodles, smart, alert and intelligent creatures, that dashed off, each to its proper plate, when a bell announced the dinner-hour. Those dogs worshipped him, and, as I told the Colonel, they would even have voted for him if they could, and that, from my point of view, needed unusual and even unreasoning loyalty. In his grounds there is a little canine cemetery with small memorial stones put up to perpetuate the memory of dogs that had had their day, and had ceased to be. I do not say that a man who loves dogs and who treats them well is necessarily a good man, but I am certain that any man who consciously and deliberately ill-treats a dog, or any other animal, is a scoundrel.

Before leaving the topic of the intelligence of animals, I may perhaps be allowed to pay a tribute to the memory of a remarkable parrot that was for many years owned by my uncle, the late Rev. George Bowden. It was a very clear talker, and was unusually gifted in imitating

the tone of voice of different people. Moreover, the parrot seemed to have a sense of humour, and took special delight in calling to the dog named "Congo" in a tone so much like that of Mrs. Bowden that "Congo" would rush in eagerly in response—only to be screamed or whistled at by the triumphant bird. More than once she startled my uncle and aunt by making some remark in imitation of the voice of some one who had been dead for years, but whose tones she had not forgotten. I doubt whether even the cleverest parrot really understands the words that are repeated, and when a remark comes in with unusual felicity it is probably a case of accidental coincidence. There was one occasion on which this particular parrot made such a happy hit that the tale got into a London paper, and was quoted and requoted in papers nearly all round the world. These are the circumstances: A Wesleyan Conference was being held in City Road Chapel, London, and my uncle at that time lived in John Wesley's old house close to the chapel. He knew that the President of the Conference would be sure to be in and out of the house continually for many days, and so before the event the parrot was most industriously taught to say, "Mr. President, I rise to order," a phrase sometimes used during Conference proceedings. The bird soon mastered the remark, and it was hoped that she

would address it to the President himself. But day after day went by without success—the President came in often, not knowing what the parrot had been taught to say, and she chattered volubly, repeating everything else she knew, but seeming obstinately to avoid the phrase for which all were waiting. But success came at last. The President was there drinking tea; there were about a dozen people present when the wise bird, choosing a quiet moment, said with the most ludicrous solemnity, and in quite an official manner, "Mr. President, I rise to order." That eminent man nearly jumped out of his chair. Those present burst into a roar of laughter, which encouraged the excited bird to scream, to whistle, and to imitate the noise made by a man clearing his throat, which she had heard somewhere, and could do with the most horrible realism. The next morning the tale was in the Press, and, as I have said, was reproduced in different continents. My uncle and aunt had that bird for nearly forty years, and it would probably have lived to this day had not some servant, intending to be kind, given it inappropriate food. During all those years the parrot showed every sign of affection towards my uncle, delighted in having its head scratched by him, and welcoming any other attentions from him. Yet throughout those forty years the same bird showed the most active hatred

for my aunt—a woman to whom all other creatures, particularly horses and dogs, were attracted instinctively. But for twoscore years the untiring bird assumed the offensive toward her, and was never once lulled into a truce.

CHAPTER XXI

TRIPS IN IRELAND AND SCOTLAND

I HAVE always had a liking for travelling and making the acquaintance of new places and peoples — within reasonable limits and in conditions of modest comfort. For I have never wished to climb dangerous mountain peaks or to explore hot and dusty deserts. During many years I confined my expeditions to places in the United Kingdom, finding in the two islands both rest and change, bracing air and a varied charm not to be excelled anywhere in the world. Some years ago I made my first visit to Ireland. I have forgotten the year, but it was at the time when there was trouble on the De Freyne estate. That may not fix the date with accuracy, as I believe that trouble in a greater or lesser degree continued in that region for quite a long time. Mine was not really a holiday trip, as I had been sent over to describe in the Press what was going on there, and before long I fear I exceeded the instructions of those who sent me. The fact is that somewhere in the neighbourhood of

Castlerea I made one or two speeches to the people advising them not to pay rent—a suggestion that was received with readiness and with warm approval by my hearers. On the other hand, the police authorities seemed to think that my interference was not justified, and they frowned on my "no rent" doctrine, the result being that for some days I was shadowed. That is to say that when I drove about on a jaunting-car two policemen followed on bicycles close behind, even as Horace says that black care is perched behind the horseman. When the peasants, who formed little groups at cross roads, saw that I was being shadowed they raised shrill cheers, though they knew not who or what I was. At that time to be looked down on by the police in Ireland was to be looked up to by the people, and it may still be the case in some parts of Ireland—and not in Ireland alone. Mr. T. W. Russell was exploring the neighbourhood at the same time, and we visited many of the cabins or shanties in which the natives lived or rather existed. No doubt he still remembers a visit we paid to the cabin of an elderly woman—tall, by no means decrepit, with a strong face suggesting tenacity of purpose. She told us that the landlord had had six agents in her time, adding grimly, "And I've fought them all." It appeared that the sixth of those agents had visited her a few days before,

and I asked her, "What did you say to him?" With a look of pride she answered, "I curst him to infinity"; and when Mr. Russell and I left we agreed that there was a Miltonic ring about the phrase.

Ireland is a land of contrasts, and it would be impossible to imagine a greater contrast than my experiences in the desolate west, and my experiences a few years later when I spent Horse Show week in Dublin. I stayed at the Shelbourne Hotel, and I have never witnessed a gayer scene than that presented by the dining-rooms at night, or the main staircase on which crowds of fashionable people sat after dinner. In those days, of course, there were no regulations as to screening the lights, and the blinds of the dining-room were left up. Quite a crowd of urchins, hanging on to some railings, watched the proceedings inside with sympathetic interest, and with a complete absence of sour jealousy. Every now and then they reported progress to those who could not see, and when the message from what may be called "the front" was to the effect that another bottle had been opened, "along the line the signal ran," the result being a tempest of cheering and general rejoicing. I have always liked Dublin for holiday purposes. The people are so easy-going and so delightfully unpunctual, for though, as I have already shown, I am a stickler for punctuality in business,

I prefer to have my surroundings unbusiness-like when on a holiday. Belfast did not appeal to me so much—it struck me as rather too rigid for comfort, and somewhat un-Irish. The City Hall, however, is at once stately and beautiful, and it interests me to know that it was designed by Sir Brumwell Thomas, who was also the architect of Stockport Town Hall in which I first heard myself officially declared to be a member of Parliament. I make no pretence of knowing Ireland thoroughly, though I have been to the Giant's Causeway in the north, to Cork in the south, into Connaught in the west and to delightful Glengariff in the east. Other spots that linger in the memory are the lakes of Killarney, Glendalough with its immemorial round towers and the Gap of Dunloe. I hope I have given that last name correctly, and I can state most truthfully that I have not forgotten my scramble over its rough stones, nor my experiences with the wild old women who invite the tourist to buy knitted socks, or some terrible liquor said to be illicitly produced whisky. One member of our party was a heavily built man who toiled on at some little distance behind us, and we explained to these pertinacious old women that he was a millionaire, anxious to spend money, but that he would at first refuse. That was his way, we declared, but all they had to do was to stick to him. This

was all absolute fiction, his purse being as light as those of the rest. The old ladies stuck to him relentlessly, at first hailing him as " darlint," and later on dismissing him with names that may be said to occupy the extreme of an antithesis. He told me afterwards that climbing through or over the gap was exhausting enough in itself, but it was a trifle when compared with his exertions in getting rid of those old women.

When in Cork, I visited the offices of the *Cork Examiner* and the *Cork Constitution*. In the second the editor showed me a neat glass case under which there was a velvet cushion on which was arranged a heap of stones. They had been flung through the windows one wild night, and he explained rather pathetically how these attentions had been made possible. For a time, he said, the police (or " poliss," as he put it) held each end of his street, and he and all in the office felt snug and secure. Then for some reason the " poliss " made a flank movement. The good editor added, " I don't know exactly what a flank movement is, but I do know that the boys were here in next to no time and the place was half filled with stones." Those resting on the cushion were specimens of the munitions used during that offensive.

My last visit to Dublin was in 1918, when I had to lecture there, and what I remember best about the visit was a delightful evening spent

at the house of Mr. Justice Dodd, where I met a party of bright, attractive people — good talkers and good listeners. A lady of the party insisted—and I believe with reason—on the following difference between English and Irish people. She said that if an English family of good position found that a holiday would be beyond its means the members of the family would give all sorts of other reasons for not going away. Irish people, she maintained, would say they could not spare the money, without feeling in any way ashamed—quite reasonably, too. The fact is that the Irish people are in the main well-bred, and nowhere in the world will you find a better blend of simple dignity and hospitable courtesy than is to be seen in the cabins of the peasants.

Turning from them, my memory recalls some ideal trips in Scotland, along the Crinan Canal, a stay at Oban, a trip to Iona, amid whose ruins Samuel Johnson found his piety grow warmer, up the Caledonian Canal to Inverness. There are some who have told me that they have not been much impressed by Inverness, but I have very pleasant memories connected with the place, and a warm admiration for it. Few sights are more fair than that of the river Ness when full of rushing amber-coloured water, clear and clean in the sunshine, and the statue of Flora Macdonald, eternally looking down the

vale, the emblem of constancy and heroism, is finely executed and superbly placed. Dr. Johnson has declared that "her name will be mentioned in history, and, if courage and fidelity are virtues, mentioned with honour." Unless I am mistaken, and I am trusting to memory after the lapse of more than a dozen years, those words are carved on the base of the statue. It is pleasant to know that those who put up this memorial to a Scottish heroine went to Dr. Johnson for a fitting tribute. He has said that "in lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath," but in this case there was nothing excessive in his praise.

I have paid many visits to Edinburgh, and great as is the charm of the city when first seen, I think it is a charm that grows at each later visit. It is unnecessary, however, to enlarge on the noble view enjoyed by those who look down Princes Street and across to the Castle with its grey walls and fluttering flag high up on the rock. I remember climbing up inside the Scott Memorial, and from the top catching sight of the Forth Bridge. It was my good fortune to be taken over that bridge not many years after it had been opened—going across to the north end in a special train, and then walking back, having the construction of the bridge explained by engineers, when, by the way, George Augustus Sala was one of the party. Two things I re-

member—there is a rivet with an enamel head in the middle, said to have been the last rivet placed in position, and to have been fixed in by Edward VII. when Prince of Wales. Also when a train passes any one standing on the bridge the effect is not exactly vibration, it is rather a jumping movement, as if the bridge bends down under the weight, and then suddenly recovers, so as to jerk a man in the air. Not very long ago I crossed in different circumstances. The war had come, and the authorities were most properly watching the bridge with constant vigilance, so that anything in the way of luggage, even the smallest handbag, was taken from the passengers. Indeed, I saw a large bouquet taken from a lady who had been to a wedding, the idea being that a bomb might be concealed in the flowers. Officials told me, and one would have suspected it in any case, that the Germans would like to bring down the bridge not only, and not chiefly, to destroy an important line of communication, but also so as to bottle up any warships that might be above it. Scotland grows on one even as does Ireland. She may be stern and wild in some districts, but there are spots in Scotland as soft and tender, as appealing and entrancing, as the lakes of Killarney themselves.

And now let me say a bold thing—I have spent ten consecutive days in Glasgow in brilliant sunshine and under a blue and cloudless sky

such as one usually associates with Italy. That may appear improbable, and perhaps it is; it may seem untrue, but it is not. I admit that Glasgow is "not ever thus," and I have known that city in the grip of a dense and choking fog for three days at a time—a fog viler than those which afflict London. There is a legend to the effect that a Cockney tourist having explored Wales summed up his impressions in this way, "The scenery is pretty, but the mutton is splendid." I hope I shall not be held to be untouched by the beauty, the grandeur and the romance of Scotland when I say that one of the things (not the only thing, be it observed) that I remember is the deep sort of plate, similar to our soup-plates, in which what are called "sweets" are served. In the days of which I write it was customary—may the custom come back with peace—to provide milk and cream lavishly with luscious fruit, and unlike the Irishman who cursed the spalpeen who invented the small liqueur glass I blessed the kindly Scot who introduced those deep and spacious plates.

Englishmen are too apt to regard any word that is unusual to them as necessarily absurd. Indeed, it has taken the alliances we have formed during a great war to shake, I hope to remove, the old notion, quoted with approval by Dr. Johnson, that "all foreigners are fools"—and it is not very long since Scotsmen were looked

on as foreigners in England. That view prevailed even after Scotland had annexed England, and may, indeed, have been confirmed by that annexation. I have been led to mention these things by the recollection of an incident in a small Scottish town when an Englishman and I asked at the post office at what time the post went out. The good woman in charge answered, "They'll be lifted at six-thirty," or rather at "sax-ther-rr-ty." It was the word "lifted" that was unusual in the opinion of my English friend, and as we came away he enlarged on what he called the absurdity of the phrase. I asked him if he had never said to any one, "I'll drop you a note," and he said he had, but failed to see what that had to do with the question. It was in vain that I pointed out that if putting a letter into the post could be described as "dropping" it, so taking it out might with equal reason be said to be "lifting" it. He would have none of this, and stuck to his opinion with that dogged tenacity that has had much to do with our success as a race. Of course no sensible, or even sane, man really believes the tales told in which the Scots are represented as dull, and incapable of seeing a joke. But sometimes I have met a Scotsman who is not "quick at the up-take," as the phrase goes, just as one may meet a dull son of any other land. On one occasion I was passing the War Office, then the

new War Office, together with a Scottish friend. We noticed that above one of the archways there were three coats of arms graven in the stone—one with the lions of England, another with the rampant lion of Scotland, and a third with the Irish harp. "Where does gallant little Wales come in?" asked my friend, with some complacency. My answer was, "Perhaps there's a leak in the roof." My braw companion did not see it; he may not have seen it during all the intervening years—but I hope and believe that some day it will dawn on him, and that then I shall be rewarded by his honest laugh.

CHAPTER XXII

MEMORIES OF WALES

THOUGH I have seen much of Ireland and Scotland, I have seen more of Wales. My first visit to the Principality—my father's land — was when I was taken to Welshpool as a very small boy, so young that all I can remember about that visit is the fact that I went there. In later years, however, I have explored all parts of Wales—north, south and central. I doubt if one can see anywhere mountain, valley, cultivated farms, water, and a fine old castle ideally placed, to greater advantage than close to Conway. It would be difficult, too, to find a fairer spot than Anglesey. When I was last there, not long ago, and looked from Holyhead golf links at the lovely sea dancing in the sunshine, I thought of Bishop Heber's lines about another island where every prospect pleases and only man is vile. My allusion is not to the good folk at Anglesey, but to the fact that we knew there were hostile submarines lurking somewhere not far off. One lovely evening we watched a number of large trans-

ports—eleven or twelve of them. The stately ships went on, convoyed and protected by war craft of various sorts. There was a touch of solemnity about the spectacle, and we were all conscious of a feeling that at any moment something might happen, that the enemy might evade the vigilance of our men, and that those who were coming to our aid might, even as we looked on, be struggling in the sea for life. The next day we heard, however, that all had gone well, and that the event turned out to be "better than our boding fears." It is not easy to say in what part of Wales I have enjoyed myself most, but if I were forced to give a decision, the verdict would be in favour of a little place amid the hills of Cardiganshire, known as the Devil's Bridge, about twelve miles from Aberystwyth. I used to make my headquarters there at the Hafod Arms Hotel, a building with big gables, said to have been built by a duke, but which duke I forget, as a shooting-box. It has been an hotel, however, for a long time, as is proved by the fact that it is mentioned as a hostelry by George Borrow, and mentioned with approval. Just as it was said that approbation from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed, so a testimonial from George Borrow as to the merits of an inn should be received with respect.

The Devil's Bridge is reached from Aberystwyth up a very steep, narrow-gauge railway.

The trains going down the line run nearly the whole way by gravitation, and have to be kept well under control, for otherwise they would certainly topple over at some of the sharp curves. Many and many a merry trip I have taken down that line at a speed that no train would be allowed to attain. The fact is that my old friend James Rees, the manager of the line, used to provide a navvy's trolley for me and my family, then unbroken. The trolley was covered by a rug, and then with the passengers and a supply of food aboard, and also with James Rees in charge, the order to " let her rip " was given. In a minute or two that trolley was skimming over the rails at what might seem a dangerous pace, but there was no danger, for the centre of gravity of the trolley was so low down as to make its turning over virtually impossible. We improvised a brake by using an old wooden lever, we stopped when and where we liked, and then, lifting off the woodwork, and pitching the wheels and axles to the side of the line, we made our way into the woods. Then came the lighting of a fire, filling the kettle from some dancing stream, brewing tea and arranging food, the little repast to be followed by tobacco and talk. It has been my lot to be present at city banquets and other notable feasts before the war, and for what I have then received I am truly thankful, but these little picnics on the

Welsh hills were far more pleasant. The reader, mindful of Virgil's thoughtful remark about the descent being easy, may wonder how we managed the return journey, but that was easy enough. We let the trolley run us down to the last station before Aberystwyth and then took the next train up the line again. As I write it comes into my mind that it was while on one of these merry trips that a telegram from London reached me saying that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had died, news that seemed to take the sparkle out of the sunshine. Another favourite trip in that neighbourhood—though it involved more exertion, and that is not in my line—was to the top of Plinlimmon. To make that ascent hardly entitles a man to call himself a mountaineer, I suppose, but so far as I am concerned 'twill serve. Plinlimmon is high enough to provide a glorious view from the top, and the mere fact that there is no reasonable opportunity of breaking your neck in going up or coming down in no way detracts, in my opinion, from the merit of the mountain, though this may induce others to despise it.

On one of my Welsh trips I made my headquarters at Barmouth, a place pleasant in itself and a convenient centre for moderate expeditions on foot. It was while I was at Barmouth that news reached me from London to the effect that Mr. George Bernard Shaw had been lost

on the hills in that neighbourhood, and I was asked to find out the facts and write an article for the Press about the incident. My first inquiries were made of the hall porter at my hotel, and the reader may imagine my consternation when I found that he had never before heard the name of George Bernard Shaw! He asked me to explain what the gentleman was like, and I described him as well as I could, saying he was a writer and public speaker. The word "speaker" seemed to suggest something to the hall porter, for he said, "There was a man down here the other day—a little man with side whiskers; he was speaking on the sands on behalf of Barnardo's home. Perhaps he was the party you mean." I said I thought not. The description was not exactly lifelike, and I have sometimes wondered what the notable man in question would have thought, and perhaps said, if he heard that any one in these islands was so ignorant as to his personality.

A few years ago I was invited to address the students at the University in Aberystwyth. Making a speech, or giving a lecture, in a University, suggests a very learned performance, but I did nothing of that sort for the sufficient reason that I could not. At the very moment of my arrival I found that there would be no stiff academic etiquette to conform to, as before I could get out of the train I was confronted

by a crowd of very lively students shouting, "Speech, speech." So I said a few words, and though they had but small merit, they were cheered frantically. Then I was taken to an open carriage, and as soon as I was seated I noticed that the horses were taken away, ropes were fastened to the carriage and about a score of students dragged it with myself perched in splendid isolation on the back seat. Those who pulled in front, and many others who ran behind, whooped and yelled in a manner that was no doubt intended to do me honour, though I found the experience rather embarrassing. For the reader must understand that the demonstration took place at about four o'clock on a fine summer afternoon, and the students romped me through most of the principal streets, causing the amazed inhabitants to come out in hundreds to see what was going on. I was horribly conscious that I was going on. When my hotel was reached I had to make a second speech before being released from the carriage, and I made a few perfunctory remarks about the proudest moment of my life—and once again the applause was deafening. Before I gave my lecture I was told that not long before my visit a very learned and eminent man had lectured, or rather had tried to lecture, there on the advantages of a sound classical education, and had been treated with contumely. Indeed, I

was assured that if the students did not approve of what was being said, they signified their disapproval in the usual manner, or at any rate, in their usual manner, by yells and hoots. There were no half-measures, and their style of cheering or hooting was always tempestuous.

Having been thus forewarned, I went, taking as my theme the inner life of the House of Commons, which enabled me to tell a variety of tales. The students soon perceived that I had no intention of teaching them anything, and so they became uproariously friendly; and my speech, though by no means a great intellectual effort, and far below the level of the other man's wise utterances on classical learning, turned out to be a success. And now for the last scene of all, that ends this strange eventful history—the young fellows explained with friendliness, but absolute determination, that they had resolved to do me honour by carrying me shoulder high from the College to my hotel. This was done, amid more yells of triumph and the vigorous singing of "Here comes the galloping Major." For the information of readers who have not been carried shoulder high I may say that it is well, if possible, to get two men of about the same height to carry you, and also to induce them to keep step. Neither of these conditions was observed in my case, and so I found out what has been discovered by many

others, that a position of elevation and prominence is not always comfortable, but as I was jolted along I murmured to myself Gilbert's words, "To me 'tis evident these attentions are well meant." And so ended one of the most boisterous days in my life.

Of other parts of Wales that I know best, I must mention Cardiff and the adjoining Rhondda Valley. Up and down that valley I have journeyed repeatedly, and I believe I have lectured at every place with a station on the line. And in those expeditions I have made the acquaintance of Mr. John Littlejohns, an orator in a land of oratory, who has amazed me, and incidentally has amazed all mankind, by the splendour of his language. As to Cardiff I may say that in it I have been entertained more often and with more engaging hospitality than in any other place. On my last visit I was shown over the splendid City Hall, which is ornamented and enriched with a dozen groups of statuary, all work of a really distinguished order, given to the city by the late Lord Rhondda. When I was there, that great Welshman, who was a nobleman not only in the technical but also in the real sense of the phrase, was lying ill at his Monmouthshire home. Every one was feeling anxious about him, as was many another far away from Lord Rhondda's native land, and when death

removed this notable citizen of the Empire, his loss was felt in distant continents as well as at home. It is a matter of pride to me to remember that he was good enough to consult me, for what my advice was worth, which may not have been much, at Grosvenor House in London when he was beginning his triumphant career as Food Controller.

I love Wales and its people, and as I think of them an incident of my early youth comes back to my memory. I was a little lad and walking with my father when we passed a policeman escorting a man wearing handcuffs. My father said he knew not what the man had done, probably he had done some wicked deed, but, he added, "I feel sorry for him. The instinct of the Welsh people is always with the pursued and the captured." It is a saying I have never forgotten, and the Welsh blood in my veins has throughout my life caused me to share that view. Having mentioned Ireland, Scotland and Wales, let me add that I do not forget dear old England, my mother's land, and a land that is too often forgotten or taken for granted. If for nothing else, England must always appeal to me for the majesty of its cathedrals. For many a year I have made the study of these ancient fanes quite a hobby. It was from the historic, regal city of York that I journeyed out to Ipswich to begin

life, as I have described in an earlier chapter. It was because of an affectionate feeling for York that I voted in the House to allow York to retain two members under the new electoral law. My vote was quite illogical, I know, but, after all, the world is more influenced by feeling and sentiment than by anything else. Patriotism itself is sentiment, and cannot, I dare say, be defended or even explained in argument. I used to moon about the city walls of York, looking at the trains which then went under those walls on their way in from London and their way out again, for this was before the present station was built. Indeed, it was owing to a recommendation from Mr. Henry Bushell of that city, one of my father's old friends, that I was given my chance with the Ransome firm at Ipswich. When I used to see the Flying Scotsman, then a train reserved for first or second class passengers, leave for London, I often used to wonder if I should ever live in what was then to me that mysterious city. I had once spent a fortnight there, earlier than the date of which I write, with my uncle, the late Dr. George Bowden, the owner of the parrot of which I have already had something to say. One thing I remember, and its recollection makes me feel very elderly—the fact that on an omnibus I rode under Temple Bar, then standing where Fleet Street ends and

the Strand begins. York has come back to my memory because of its cathedral, which I have always regarded as unequalled in the world. I know what unending controversies may be started when once one begins to compare the cathedrals of this country—Lincoln, Canterbury, Ely, Wells, Durham, Exeter—and many another, as also buildings of the same class, such as Wimborne Minster, Christchurch Priory or Selby Abbey. I make no pretence to arrange them in order of precedence or merit, but I do place York Minster at the top of the list. And I have learned to love another group of English towns—such as Cheltenham, Bath, Harrogate, Tunbridge Wells and Malvern. There is a charm about them which conquers their inherent snobbishness. But the varied delights of England are, if I may use a phrase sacred to journalism, "too numerous to mention." In thinking over my English holiday experiences I naturally cannot forget the Lake District, which I have explored with continual delight, being favoured by perfect weather for a month, finding good hotels everywhere, to say nothing of coaching facilities and virtually everything that a holiday tourist wants—always, of course, before the war.

Yet when all has been said I think some of my happiest holiday experiences have been enjoyed in times which were spent partly in

this country and partly abroad, though I slept in England every night. Let me explain how this was done, and let me advise the reader to do likewise when peace makes it possible. On three or four occasions I have spent a week or ten days at the Lord Warden Hotel in Dover. On every day I used to write my "Sub Rosa" article in the pleasant sun-lit smoking-room looking out on to the Admiralty Pier, and in those days one could post a letter at noon knowing it would be delivered the same evening in London. Then I would go to the boat that was awaiting the arrival of the eleven-o'clock train from Victoria, go aboard before the passengers came scrambling on, selfishly select the best spot for my deck-chair and regard with complacency their struggles. At Calais I used to lunch, and lunch well, at the buffet, leisurely and at ease, once more deriving comfort from observing the anxious haste of those who were going on to Paris. The afternoon boat took me back to Dover in time for tea at the Lord Warden. And so it has happened that for ten consecutive days I have breakfasted in England, lunched in France, and dined in England once more. If and when this is possible again I feel sure that any reader who follows my example will be thankful for the suggestion, always supposing that he, or she, like myself, never suffers from sea-sickness.

CHAPTER XXIII

FRANCE AND BELGIUM

MOST men who visit the Continent begin by going to Paris, just as most readers of the Waverley novels start on *Ivanhoe*, and my first trip abroad was to that city, in 1889, when the French were celebrating the hundredth anniversary of their revolution. There was, of course, the inevitable exhibition, and I have formed the opinion that no city is seen to advantage in exhibition time, and that exhibitions themselves are nearly all alike. Long ago I have grown weary of "trophies" made by piling up thousands of jam pots or pickle jars, and, as the heat was great in 1889, and Paris was crammed full and overfull with visitors, I did not entirely enjoy the trip. But during other visits in quieter times I have learned to love Paris, and have found continual delight in exploring her famous thoroughfares and her quaint back streets and byways. On one occasion an old Ipswich friend and I stayed in the Rue Jacob for several days—not at an hotel, but at the offices of a type-founding firm. The

partners were away, and lent us their bedrooms in the building, and also let us have the services of their valet, who provided us with our morning coffee and rolls. In this way we saw far more of real Parisian life than if we had been at one of the big hotels where Frenchmen are scarce. That valet was a true son of Paris—indeed, I doubt if he had ever been out of the city.

My Ipswich friend was as typically English as the other man was French. Though a civilian and a business man he delighted in everything that had to do with military life, was never tired of reading or talking about battles, and had a prodigious amount of information about Napoleon. Moreover, he was peppery and even bellicose, especially if he thought his own country was treated with disrespect. One day as we were examining the Arc de Triomphe he suddenly became infuriated because he said that among the names of French victories inscribed on the Arch there was one that was not a victory at all, but a defeat. When thus enraged he was always very demonstrative, and made great play with his umbrella; what was worse, so far as I was concerned, was that he seemed to hold me responsible for anything that upset him. Thus in regard to the miserable battle, about which I knew nothing, he demanded that I should explain how the name came to be included among the French victories. It was

in vain that I tried to soothe him—there he stood gesticulating, and describing in detail the battle in question through all its phases, ending with the complete rout and headlong flight of the French. When I told him that after all the Arch belongs to the French, and that they can put what inscriptions they like on it, he became really dangerous, and was regarded with polite concern by one or two bystanders, who were doubtless confirmed in their view as to Englishmen being mad. He broke out again at Napoleon's tomb. At first he was quiet and subdued, and talked about the vanity of human wishes and so forth. Unfortunately among the old captured colours that hang around the tomb there was a British flag, and immediately he turned on me, insisting that I should tell him how that flag got there. No one, not even Mr. Gladstone himself, could have explained it away, as there it hung. Of course I hastily agreed with my friend that it was absurd to suggest that Napoleon ever captured a British flag even by accident. The affair was never satisfactorily explained, and I was relieved to see that the flag was well out of reach, as otherwise my companion would certainly have walked off with it, even if he had had to tackle the entire garrison of Paris.

There is a rather general impression in this country that Paris is altogether given over

to gaiety, or at any rate to lounging, sauntering and idleness, but in reality the residents, when taken apart from visitors, are a remarkably strenuous, hard-working and business-like people. Their shops and offices are opened earlier than ours, and remain open later. I have stayed more than once at the Buffet Hotel, which forms part of the Gare du Nord buildings, and have noticed that long before eight in the morning thousands upon thousands of men and women, most of them young, pour out of that station and hurry away as grimly intent on business as if they were in Glasgow. Indeed, the scene at the Gare du Nord in a morning (of course I am alluding to normal times) very much resembles that to be witnessed at Liverpool Street Station, except that I believe the Paris workers arrive earlier than the London crowd. Of course, however, in a great city that attracts mankind from all over the world there are plenty of opportunities of comfortably doing nothing, as also of dining reasonably and well. One night I made what I thought at the time was a discovery. I was in the Rue de Valois feeling hungry, and resolved that I would go into the next eating-place I saw, and did so, the house being described as the Restaurant du Bœuf à la Mode, a name that did not suggest anything elaborate—indeed, before going in I thought it might turn out to be something in the ham-and-beef-shop style.

I was soon undeceived, and since then I have introduced several men of gastronomic experience to it, and have in every case earned their gratitude. I was mistaken in thinking that I had discovered the place, for it had been known to the judicious for many a year. Indeed, it was founded in 1792, in the days of revolution, and I have since found out that it has been visited regularly for a long time, in those years when trips to Paris were easy, by some of the Judges of our High Court. For some reason or other our Judges have a great reputation as experts in the art of dining—possibly because they have earned and therefore deserve it. In any case, the Bœuf à la Mode restaurant still remains my favourite place of the sort in Paris—always assuming that it has not been swept away or in some way ended by horrid war.

There is another dining-place which I entered one night quite accidentally with a barrister friend, Mr. N. H. Thomas, whom I had first met in Aberystwyth, and there we had an adventure not likely to be forgotten by either of us. This was the restaurant known as Prunier's, but I cannot remember the address, though I think it is not very far from the Opera House. Now Prunier's has a remarkably humble appearance when viewed from outside, and what attracted us was that in the window there were cards showing that Colchester and

Whitstable natives, and other oysters, were on sale. We resolved to have a few oysters, and then to go on elsewhere for dinner, and so we went in, secretly imagining that the good Prunier was making an honest struggle to earn a living, and feeling that he ought to be encouraged. As soon as we were inside we learnt that the customers were entertained upstairs, and up we went, only to find that the supposedly humble Prunier seemed to own nearly the whole street. Large and handsome rooms stretched away in each direction, the decorations were superb, the waiters were lordly, and the head waiter had the bearing of an archbishop. We scorned to show any surprise, and ordered our oysters with affected unconcern. Then it occurred to us that, as the place seemed good enough to entertain ambassadors and plenipotentiaries at a Congress of Nations, we might as well dine there. I left the ordering to be done by my friend Thomas, for though I have a very good opinion of my own French, it does not always seem to convey my meaning correctly, even to the most sympathetic Frenchman.

What we had resolved to have first of all after the oysters was just a very small portion of duckling. Thomas explained again and again, with the superb oratorical gestures of a Welshman, enhanced by those shrugs of the shoulder which are supposed to be understood and

welcomed by the French, that we did not want much—the merest trifle would do—and the bowing and smiling waiter seemed to grasp the idea, and away he went. Gradually, as the time passed, I began to be haunted by a fear that there might be some misunderstanding, and I knew that if they were preparing a special dish the cost might be staggering. We became more and more uneasy until at length speculation ceased and reality arrived—an appalling reality, too. A procession marched up to our table, headed by the archiepiscopal chief waiter. He was followed by a man of great strength, who was carrying on a huge dish the largest specimen of the poultry tribe I have ever seen. At first I thought they must have slain and cooked an ostrich. The strong man of the party slowly and with evident effort placed the vast dish with its huge load on the table, and, striking an attitude, he exclaimed in triumph, "Voilà!" For a moment there was silence, then an imprecation escaped the usually blameless lips of Thomas, and for a moment it seemed as though the *entente cordiale* was in danger. Here I interposed, exclaiming, "Houp-la!" and by means of gestures and pantomimic display not quite in keeping with sanity, I intimated that all was well. The vast bird was then with difficulty raised again and taken away for dismemberment (the word "carving" would be inadequate), as what had taken

place was only a preliminary display. The march out was as dignified as the march in—the recessional equalling in this respect the processional—and as we watched the retreating performers the full absurdity of the affair overwhelmed us and we both bent down in helpless laughter.

The French people present were, as always, very polite, and though they had affected not to notice what was going on, they had seen and appreciated every detail, and when we laughed (but not until then) there was what newspapers describe as "general merriment." It was a French Marshal who said of Balaclava that while it was magnificent it was not war, and on this later occasion our courage was freely recognised, though here, as at Balaclava, it was all too obvious that "some one had blundered." When the dish bearing its pyramid of food came back we did our best to make some impression on its bulk, but all our efforts made little difference. We paid the bill—I shudder now as I think of the amount—and I tried to explain to the waiter that what we had left was to be handed over to the municipal authorities to be distributed among the poor of Paris. It is perhaps well that my meaning was shrouded in the obscurity of my French. As we went through the door on our way out we cast one longing, lingering look behind, returned the courteous signals of farewell waved to us by the

smiling Parisians and agreed that the national motto, "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité," should be enlarged by the addition of "et Prunier."

I have seen some, but by no means all, of the countries in Europe—Norway, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, France, Italy, Germany and Austria—but my travelling has never been adventurous. Indeed, I can hardly be said to have left the tourists' beaten track, but I contend there is much to learn and to enjoy even in such unambitious journeyings as mine. I am pleased to be able to record the fact that, though I had many opportunities of joining groups of travellers who were publicly received and entertained in Germany, I never took part in such expeditions. Indeed, I not only always paid my way, but have sometimes thought I paid too much. It is not popular to admire anything of alien enemy origin just now—music, painting, poetry, architecture or anything else—but perhaps I may be allowed, without offence, to say that Vienna always strikes me as one of the finest cities I have seen. I was in some of the enemy's haunts less than a year before the war, in Mainz, Cologne and along the Rhine. But other places now in the grip of the enemy, though not belonging to him, remain more deeply impressed on my memory. In September 1913 I explored and stopped for some time in Liége, Namur and Dinant—places that were then within a year of

being brutally ravaged. At that time nothing could have been more peacefully pleasant than Namur and the river leading to Dinant, though it is true that mimic war was then going on. The Belgians were conducting their grand manœuvres, and a large group of military attachés from various lands were staying at my hotel. There were the British, French, American, Japanese and Italian representatives, possibly others, and of course the German was there, riding about with the rest, seeing and hearing everything. He seemed to be a man of boisterous good-humour, but it is probable, nay, it is certain, that he knew well enough just what would happen to Belgium, and when it would happen, unless she abandoned her position as an independent State. The last time I saw the group was when they were riding along the side of the river on which I was going by boat to Dinant. They were talking gaily, the river was charming beyond description, and all around was evidence of peace and prosperity. And Dinant, with its big church with the "onion" tower from which the bells sounded a musical peal each quarter—and kept on so long that the tinkling at a quarter past the hour scarcely seemed to cease before that at the half past began—Dinant, too, seemed to have no sense of ills to come. Eleven months later I heard that the curious church tower had been smashed,

though it could not be of any military value to either side, and I have been told that the hotel in which I had such an easy time has been entirely obliterated. It is when I think of the quaint beauty of those scenes, the friendliness of the people, the entire absence of any excuse for attack, that I detest more than ever the horde of savages who have desolated a fair land. On the same trip I saw, by no means for the first time, the field of Waterloo, and spent some days in Brussels, which seemed to me more gay and prosperous than ever—an ideal capital, large enough for all requirements of interest and amusement, and at the same time not too large.

Other places visited on other trips, generally but not always in happy, and sometimes in merry, surroundings, come back to my memory. There is Prague, for instance, where, in addition to a wonderful bridge, I specially remember two things. First of all, there was the wild, barbaric style in which I was whirled along in a little open carriage drawn by two leaping horses whose tails swept the ground, and driven furiously by a Jehu who looked as though he ought to be a pirate king on the Spanish or some other main. In the second place, Prague is the only town in which I have stayed at an hotel whose name was put up in six different languages. In English, I remember, it was " The Black Horse,"

and there were five equivalents of that phrase in other tongues. It was while travelling to Prague that I saw also in many languages a notice in the train warning one against using the alarm signal except in a real emergency. The English version said that any one using the signal "without due cause will be liable to judicial pursuits," a phrase that suggests being chased by a Lord Chief Justice. Another town I have explored with interest and increasing interest is Innsbruck, where may be found what is, I believe, some of the finest bronze statuary in the world. At Innsbruck I noticed that down whatever street you look you will find a beautiful snow-peaked mountain at the end. Basle and Zurich, too, are places of pleasant memories to me, as also are Milan and Dijon. In spite of the fact that my travels have led me only to places visited by nearly everybody, it is a curious fact that I have never seen either Lucerne or Grindelwald. But I have journeyed more than once to Samaden and St. Moritz—I have gone there in winter and in summer, in sorrow and in joy. Should I ever travel on the Continent again, and have enough time at my disposal, I shall first revisit Samaden in the Engadine, for it was there that my son died and was buried in the St. Peter's Cemetery, there resting, as his tombstone shows, "Until the day break and the shadows flee away." I have not crossed

the water since the war began, as I have shrunk from joining parties of those who go to what they call "the front" only to stare. So the last I saw of the Continent was when, late in 1913, I left Ostend for Dover, little thinking that before long the waterway by which we left would be blocked by as brilliantly skilful and daring a feat as even the history of the British Navy can show.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN THE TRAIN OF THE KAISER

ON one occasion only have I travelled beyond the confines of Europe, and then I did not go to the part of the world I have always wanted to see more than any other—Canada and the United States. A man in this country who has never crossed the Atlantic, especially if he has lived for sixty years, as I have, is in these days almost an oddity, but I am that man. We have been described as the creature of circumstances, and it has been owing to circumstances over which I have had no control, to use an extremely ancient phrase, that I have never seen those big democracies in the West which have always attracted me greatly. The first peep I ever had at the world beyond Europe was one morning when I was awakened, partly by the sudden stopping of the noisy engines on my vessel, and partly by the shouting rabble that surrounded her in boats, at Port Said. But let me relate my experiences on that trip from the beginning.

It was late in the year 1898 that arrange-

ments were made for me to be one of a group of special correspondents to visit Palestine and Syria on the occasion of the Kaiser's trip or tour, which was known as the High-pressure Pilgrimage. Whether we went with him, or he with us, is still a matter of dispute; and as I am always in favour of a reasonable compromise, I will say that we went, if not together, at any rate at the same time.

A few days before I started, I heard with pleasure that my entertaining friend, Mr. Melton Prior, of the *Illustrated London News*, was to be one of the party. He was a very experienced traveller, having been in a dozen campaigns, and on other missions of importance all over the world, so I consulted him as to what I ought to take with me, finding him most helpful, as his advice was sound. I remember how he impressed on me the wisdom of not taking too much in the way of baggage, saying that some men encumbered themselves with twice the necessary number of things because they feared that some might be lost on the journey. And, as to that, I well remember how he stood in Fleet Street, and smote the pavement with his stick, crying aloud that only a fool lost things when travelling. He took great pains to explain particularly what sort of a fool he meant, and he succeeded in making his point quite clear.

"I have been all over the world," he ex-

claimed, "and I have never lost even a collar, no, nor a stud either."

After I had thanked and congratulated him we parted, and I agreed to look out for him at Brindisi, for I was leaving London a day before he left, as I meant to go to Paris first, and then to travel to Brindisi; whereas he, and most of the others, intended to go direct from Calais to Brindisi without touching Paris. I crossed on a Thursday night, visited Paris, and then journeyed on, reaching Brindisi on the Sunday morning; and having found my berth on the *Isis* and enjoyed a bath, I awaited my friends, who were due on the Sunday evening. I explored Brindisi during the day, and was shown a house which I was told had been Virgil's —a man who gave me a good deal of trouble when I was at school. And then in the evening the through train from Calais came in, and as soon as I saw my friend Melton Prior I also saw that something was wrong. He was annoyed, nay he was furious, about something; and I may say that when Melton Prior was vexed he let every one know all about it, using great plainness of speech. The fact was, that he had lost all his luggage, except the things he was wearing, and a little hand-bag that he clutched and swung about in a dangerous manner! It seems that there had been a blunder at Calais, and his baggage had been

sent to Paris ! And this was the man who had never lost a collar, and who had startled Fleet Street when explaining to me the precise type of fool it was who lost things when travelling !

That night when all the others dressed for dinner on the *Isis* poor Prior was wearing a jacket that was either a blazer or part of his pyjamas. Some of the passengers who did not know him regarded him rather superciliously, as if he were a freak, and I remember how he revenged himself by sketching these folk in a style of violent caricature. He also seemed to find some relief in explaining exactly what he thought of the railway officials responsible for the mistake. But Melton Prior was " a man of cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows," and was as lively as a cricket on the short run to Port Said, where he proposed to buy what he could in the way of clothing. I understand that Port Said has been considerably improved during recent years—and that is quite possible. But twenty years ago it could not fairly be described as a good shopping centre, and I shall not soon forget my lively friend's adventures in one or two ready-made clothes shops when he was trying to find something that would suit his style of beauty. Most of the things spread out for his inspection were evidently intended for shipwrecked mariners, and though Prior was by no means a fop he was rather particular

about his dress. Again and again he declared emphatically to the insinuating shopkeepers that he was not going to be dressed up like a "bo'sun bold" or a condemned mariner! At last he had to be, I will not say satisfied with, but prepared to accept, a set of reach-me-downs in grey flannel, considerably too large for him. He made the best of the situation, and tried to compensate for the lack of style and of fit by putting on a jaunty swagger; but though I was most anxious to soothe my distinguished friend, I could not pretend that his appearance was a complete success.

He had more than one telegram explaining that his lost property was being sent after him; but, as he pointed out forcibly, there was little real consolation in knowing that his smart clothing was jogging along only forty-eight hours behind him. It was at Haifa, near the foot of Mount Carmel, and not far from Acre, where we were encamped for a week, that at last Prior and his long-lost garments were reunited, and Melton was himself again. It was also at the same place that, acting on his advice, I tried to learn something of horsemanship, about which I knew but little—and one day I gave a display that has probably never been surpassed even in a circus. They had provided me with a small, wiry Syrian horse, and I was assured it was very intelligent. I dare say it

was, but even a dull brute would have soon discovered that I was a beginner. So long as he walked I was all right, and when he stood still I felt quite at home on his back, and even posed for a photograph. But one morning I found myself in for sterner work. I had walked the creature out on to the plain at the foot of Mount Carmel, and was sitting at my ease watching with envy the performances of a crack cavalry corps from Constantinople, when suddenly the galloping host wheeled round and came thundering in my direction. They came on like a whirlwind, like a prairie fire—like anything. I was being

> "Charged by an army while
> All the world wondered."

To shout out "Whoa!" or even "Halt!" would have been quite useless, and I had just begun to sweat with anxiety when my little horse seemed to grasp the potentialities of the situation. He cocked his ears forward and wheeled quickly round, feeling that the time had come when some steps should be taken. He took them—he advanced not by steps and strides, but by leaps and bounds—as Mr. Gladstone once said about British trade. My advisers had told me to grip with my legs or knees, or something, and the advice might have been good for normal times, but this was a time of crisis. I knew enough about the

business to be aware that in riding as in politics the great thing is to avoid losing your seat if you can. So, ignoring all the niceties of Rotten Row form, I grabbed hold of the saddle with one hand and of the brute's mane with the other, letting the reins take care of themselves. The effect on my horse seemed to be very stimulating, for he travelled like destruction, and he lived up to the character for intelligence that had been given him, by bolting straight away from those heathen warriors. I could hear their roars, perhaps of baffled rage, as they saw I was about to escape, and, alas! possibly the scoundrels were laughing. Indeed, I was told afterwards by friends that every now and then great wide glimpses of landscape could be seen between me and the saddle, but still I clutched and held on with both hands diligently. I knew not where the scooting little animal was taking me, nor did I care or long as he saved me from the pursuing Turk. As a matter of fact, the horse, guided by Heaven-inspired instinct, headed straight for our camp, dashed past all other tents, avoiding the guy ropes with admirable cunning, and stopped just by my own. I was still hanging on desperately to saddle and to mane, and when at last I scrambled off—"dismounted" is, I believe, the term—my friends gave three cheers, and Melton Prior seemed to be particularly pleased

by the display. "Capital, capital," he shouted, "do it again." I declined the invitation, and was fortunate enough to make arrangements to share for the greater part of the journey a light spring wagon along with Prior and a worthy clergyman who had been a British chaplain at our Embassy in Vienna. That reverend gentleman carried a huge ordnance map of the country, which he kept on unfolding and displaying every now and then so that his elbows caught Prior and myself in the face more than once. Some of my friend's protests were quite distressing in their vigour, but the chaplain was a broad-minded man, and told me privately that he regarded Melton Prior as a very amusing person and in many respects most original. The one thing that now interests me about that ordnance map was the statement printed at the bottom to the effect that the survey had been carried out some years before by one Lieut. H. H. Kitchener—the Field-Marshal and Secretary at War of later days.

Much has been said about the careful manner in which this tour had been planned, about the praiseworthy way in which the time-table was kept, and the foresight shown in making all the necessary arrangements for camping out and for transport. All these tributes are well deserved, but when it is further suggested that this shows how superior the Germans are to

ourselves in regard to all this sort of thing, I demur. The fact is that all these arrangements had been made and were carried out by Thomas Cook & Son—as British an institution as the Bank of England. And so it was that the Kaiser, personally conducted by Cook, accompanied by me (and by some others)—or accompanying us—journeyed through a land that had been surveyed and mapped out by one who was to be years later one of the chief instruments in the beginning of his destruction.

The Kaiser remained on his warship yacht, the *Hohenzollern*, for a day and a night off Haifa before coming ashore, and straight in front of him was the old fort at Acre, gleaming and white in the sunshine and set off by the beautifully blue water. Had he been able to project his mind forward for sixteen years to the year 1914 he might have taken a keener interest in Acre, for it was there that another man, who set out on what he imagined was going to be an expedition of world-wide conquest, met with a check that upset his time-table and ruined his project. Napoleon made six attempts to capture Acre and was beaten off every time, saying in the bitterness of his soul, "Upon the fate of that petty town depends the future of the East," even as in 1914 an unexpected delay at Liége had much, and perhaps all, to do with wrecking the rush to Paris. History

repeats itself sometimes in regard to small details as well as great events. Thus it is on record that Napoleon, in trying to explain his failure to the Directory in Paris, said that he had really taken Acre, but had not allowed his men to enter because the plague was raging there. And early in this war the Germans put up announcements in Brussels saying that they had captured Paris, but their troops remained outside because Paris had been smitten by cholera. Whether the Kaiser mused about Napoleon's set-back in that part of the world, I cannot say, but he was seen studying Acre through field-glasses from the *Hohenzollern.* It was about twenty-four hours after his arrival in those waters that on 26th October 1898 he landed, and I believe a French journalist was responsible for the rumour spread at the time that His Majesty, when coming ashore, had tried to walk on the water, and, having failed, declared that he did not believe it had ever been done; moreover, I fear that I was responsible for suggesting the notion to my French confrère. Nothing of the sort really happened. He landed in the usual way—that is to say, his usual way—amid the firing of guns and the blare of trumpets, surrounded by huge German officers, carefully selected because of their height, and received by Turkish Pashas who seemed to have been chosen because of their

girth. Haifa made as brave a show as it could in the way of bunting, and I was amused and surprised to find that among the flags of all nations that had been dug out for the occasion was that of the Isle of Man, showing the well-known design of three legs and the usual Latin motto. Some idea of the size of the procession may be obtained from the fact that in addition to all the Turkish cavalry Messrs. Cook had 800 muleteers, 1200 horses and mules and 97 carriages, some of them marvellous survivals of a past age, ramshackle nondescripts on wheels such as are seen at decaying seaside resorts. The horses also varied in regard to size, quality and action—some holding up their heads like giraffes, and others preferring to nose the ground like bloodhounds on the trail. Of course, there was a band. It did not play "It's a long, long way to Cæsarea," as that inspiring air was not then known, but the bandsmen set to work with almost epileptic fury. And then the great unwieldy show moved off along a road almost knee-deep in dust as fine as snuff—Emperor, Empress, officers, pashas, soldiers, Arab drivers and muleteers, hangers-on and a most notable group of journalists of many nations, some riding on mules. I remember writing at the time, "Nothing equal to this has been seen on earth since Noah came out of the Ark, or since Barnum entered London." One

of the scenes that I shall never forget is the start of this show as it began to sway and stagger along the appalling road, sending up a huge cloud of dust that could be seen for miles.

And another scene that will never fade from my memory is that of the Kaiser entering Jerusalem at a quarter-past three on the afternoon of Saturday, 29th October 1898. Here again my regard for accuracy compels me to contradict another rumour spread by the merry French journalists, and even described in print and confirmed by pictures, to the effect that His Majesty entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, while the people strewed palm branches in the way and shouted "Hosanna." It was not like that at all. He was mounted on a big white, or very light grey, horse, and he was arrayed in what may be called pantomime Crusader costume. A white silk robe stretched from his shoulders over the hindquarters of the horse, and altogether he reminded one of a circus edition of Richard the Lion-hearted. It was not safe for any one to laugh, as His Majesty took himself and the whole affair very seriously—indeed, his general bearing suggested that he was saying to himself, "I am more than the limit—I am absolutely IT!" One of those who was looking on was that notable alderman, Sir William Treloar, who, though he had not then been Lord Mayor, had seen many civic shows.

I asked him if he could remember any man in tin armour, or indeed any one taking part in a Lord Mayor's Show, who had ever done it better. Sir William thought not; he was of opinion that the Kaiser had beaten the lot—always excepting the Lord Mayor's coachman, who was, of course, *sui generis* and out of the competition. I may add that the Emperor did not enter, as has been said, through the Jaffa Gate, for, in order to avoid an awkward corner, the Turks had thoughtfully knocked a great breach in the historic walls of Jerusalem and prepared a special road for him. In order to do this, they had demolished about a dozen little shops, and had sent the shopkeepers about their business—supposing the poor wretches had any business left. There was no security of tenure and no compensation for disturbances in Jerusalem under the rule of the gentle Turk.

And now for another memorable scene in the old, old city. A day or two later I might have been seen, nay, I was seen, arrayed in what is called evening dress, walking through the white, dusty and sunbaked streets of Jerusalem a little before eight in the morning. To march out at that hour dressed as if one was going to the opera at night gives one the appearance of dissipation—but I was going to church. It had been noised abroad that the Kaiser was going to preach a sermon at the dedication of a church,

and I felt that this was something too good to miss. As Gilbert has put it, "Such an opportunity might ne'er occur again." I have attended many religious services in my time, but this was unique. Nearly all those in the crowded church had to stand in stifling heat for more than an hour before the show arrived, but at last the chief performer and the members of his troupe came in. They were in full uniform, armed to the teeth, and they goose-stepped and cake-walked up the church, a sight for gods and men—and certainly for special correspondents. As they came in, the choir, composed of men from the *Hohenzollern*, and powerful singers, sang the pleasing and appropriate anthem, "Rejoice, daughter of Zion, for behold thy King cometh unto thee." His Majesty accepted this tribute as a very proper attention, and saluted in a gracious manner. There were three sermons—all long—and I thought once more of Gilbert and those who are condemned

> "To listen to sermons
> By mystical Germans
> Who preach from ten till four."

First came a local German pastor, and one could not blame the man for saying all he knew, as it was his only chance of preaching to his Emperor. When he had finished, one of the Court Chaplains followed, and managed to keep

on a little longer than his humbler brother. But then came the star turn, for the Kaiser rose quickly from a gilded chair, marched up to the altar, turned round, clicked together his heels—and then (not going into the pulpit) he began to preach as hard as he could. I was unable to follow His Majesty, as he addressed us in German, but he was evidently telling us all about it, and his discourse sounded like a series of words of command at a review. I recognised one word—"ah-men"—and as it was the last I was glad to hear it. While the two chaplains had been preaching the Emperor, sitting in front, had his back to the congregation and could not see what was going on, and many of the officers had shown that they were bored, yawning and looking at their watches. There were no such displays, however, when the Kaiser was up. Every one was rigidly at attention, the officers and the men in the choir looking like petrified sausages, while even the two chaplains looked as if they thought, "Now this is real preaching." There was only one person there who seemed to be unimpressed—the Empress! She appeared to take it all as a matter of course, as if saying, "Well, well—it's only William. He will do this sort of thing. He often talks like this at home." But all the others seemed to hang on the words of the Imperial preacher. Perhaps I ought to make

one other exception, as near to me stood a young Turkish officer, and now and then he sighed gently. But he was quite polite, looking at the people through his glasses in a curious what-have-we-here manner that reminded me of Mr. Balfour surveying friends and opponents alike in the House of Commons. At last the long performance was over. The procession formed up again, and, with spurs clinking and sabres rattling, they goose-stepped down the church and out into the hot streets again where the patient Turkish troops had been standing all the time.

It was a trying experience for us all, but it was worth enduring, for one does not every day have a chance of hearing an Emperor, and such an Emperor, preach a sermon in a church and in Jerusalem. And I ought in fairness to add two extenuating circumstances that afforded some relief. In the first place, the singing was very good, especially when they sang with immense gusto and effect the great hymn, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.* Every one joined in except the young Turkish officer, who seemed startled, and one or two of my journalistic colleagues, who were apparently not accustomed to hymn-singing. And then there was absolutely no collection, either during the service or at the door as we went out. Of course I had to rely on others to learn what the Kaiser's

sermon was about, and I was told that it had to do chiefly with the sacredness of discipline and the beauty of obedience, favourite themes of his. That being his subject, I can testify to the fact that his style of delivery was thoroughly in keeping with it. His sentences were rapped out like a series of words of command to troops in the field, or even of orders to a gang of convicts in a prison yard. The whole affair was a rather trying experience, and yet I have never regretted having gone through it, though if I were invited to attend another service of the sort I should not accept the invitation.

CHAPTER XXV

CORRESPONDENTS IN CAMP

DURING those few days when the Kaiser was preaching and performing in Jerusalem we of the British Press had to live in tents outside the walls, as the city was crammed full. I have no doubt we were better off outside, for though the Scriptural remark, "without are dogs"—and awful specimens they were—is still true, within there were smells and stenches of the most appalling sort, far worse and more pungent than those perceived by Coleridge in Cologne. In each of the small tents there were two correspondents, and then there was a large Mess Tent in the middle of the camp, where we all met for meals. My companion in the small tent was Charlie Hands, of the *Daily Mail*, and as he and I were the only representatives of the halfpenny press on the expedition, he fixed up a card outside the tent bearing the touching legend:

THE HA'PENNY PRESS
HANDS & HUGHES
HEAVEN BLESS OUR HAPPY HOME.

I knew he would be a most interesting companion, as he was full of original ideas expressed in quaint language, but I was surprised to discover that he had a most extensive acquaintance with Scripture—indeed, he seemed to know as much about it as a bishop. This was not the case with all my journalistic colleagues on the expedition. One of them, whose name I withhold, asked me at Haifa whether it was Elijah or Elisha who did something or other on Mount Carmel. I explained that it was Elijah who had there smitten the Court Clergy of his day, and had disestablished, disendowed and even disembowelled some of them. My colleague replied easily, " Ah yes, of course—Elisha was the man who was eaten up by a she-bear ; I always mix up those two." I left it at that!

Another notable Press representative in the camp was Charles Williams, the rugged war correspondent, and between him and Melton Prior, whom I have already mentioned, there was a deadly feud. As I happened to be an intimate friend of both, I asked each privately what was the origin of the quarrel, and neither of them could remember, though each was certain that the other had behaved abominably about something or other. Thus they never spoke to each other, though they often talked at each other, sometimes carrying on a heated controversy by addressing their remarks to me,

just as members in the House tell the Speaker what they think of other members opposite. This was sometimes embarrassing, and was peculiarly so one memorable night in the Mess Tent when a storm broke out that I have not forgotten. We had finished dinner and were smoking when some ancient rooster began to crow. I may say that the poultry in that part of the world are very noisy in the night, so that what with the Kaiser all day and cocks and hens all night we could not get much complete rest. The cock that crowed on this occasion had a wheezy tremolo note that suggested extreme age, and I thoughtlessly said something to the effect that the brute seemed to be old enough to be the same fowl that had upset St. Peter. Upon this Melton Prior made some remarks about Peter as the custodian of the keys and the difficulty some of us would have in getting past him. Now Charlie Williams was, though rough in speech, a very devout man, and he blazed forth, almost shouting :

" Hughes ! I will not have my holy faith ridiculed by that little caricature of humanity sitting by you."

I immediately said it was really my fault for having mentioned the name of St. Peter, and upon this Melton Prior exclaimed :

" Don't apologise, Hughes, on my behalf to that old ruffian over there."

And for some time they continued to exchange what is called animated conversation at each other through me. As I have said, mine was an embarrassing position. It was as if I was a small buffer state between two hostile and contending Powers. And all the time that miserable fowl outside kept on crowing in husky exultation.

The disputes in our little party were, however, very few. The fact is, we were kept together by community of interest, and by the circumstance that the Turk was anxious to hinder and interfere with us as much as possible. Of course every man had to carry a passport, as without that he would not have been allowed to land. Then we had to procure an inland passport, called, I think, a "teskéré," and I remember how the British Consul—a German, by the way, named Schmidt—translated the questions of the Turkish official and my answers when this document was obtained. I still have it. My age, which I gave truthfully as forty, is put down as twenty-five, but whether I owed this delicate compliment to the German "British" Consul, or to the Turk, I cannot say. The Turkish official stared at me in silence for some time, and I asked the Consul what this meant. The answer was, "He is going to describe your personal appearance," so I tried to put on an ingratiating look, as one

does when being photographed. And this is what the heathen Turk made of it on a document which I still treasure. It is headed "Firman," and then follow these particulars :

> Name, missing ; Eyes, darkish ; Body, not particularly marked ; Nationality, English ; Destination, England ; Health, free of fever ; Religion, not explained ; Passport, produced ; This is to give notice and to warn all our officials that bearer of these presents has satisfied our officials and that there is no reason why he should be interrupted in his journey.

Of course it was only after some time that I had the Firman translated, and so I had no opportunity of telling the official that he lied when he said that my name was missing, and that he lied again and abominably when he said that I had not explained my religion, as I had done so carefully, in detail and as I thought eloquently. Possibly the Turkish dog and the German were even then in alliance, and were determined to insult a British citizen. All this would have been of no importance, and I would also have put up with the slighting and even flippant description of my personal appearance—"eyes, darkish ; body, not particularly marked"—if the Firman had enabled me to travel without interruption. But it did not, for we were soon

informed by the Turks that the Kaiser had demanded that the Press representatives must never be within twenty-four hours' journey of him. This we did not believe, as we knew our Wilhelm, and it was not more likely that he wished to avoid publicity than that Barnum would enter a town by stealth. So we held a meeting in one of our camps, the senior correspondent sat on a portmanteau and was said to take the chair, and every man in the party made a speech. I remember enlarging at length and in terms of fervour approaching exaltation on the domestic habits of the Sultan—it was old Abdul who had been described by both Mr. Gladstone and William Watson as damned, while Dr. Parker had said that he hoped he would be. We all hoped so, too, Melton Prior and Charles Williams agreeing for once. Soon after this we received assurances from the Kaiser that he had not expressed the wishes attributed to him, and so we tackled the Turk once more. Turkish officials are slow and deliberate in their methods, except when carrying out a massacre, but we gave them no peace until each member of our party received a special passport, written in Turkish on a half-sheet of notepaper, and here is a translation of mine :

> Mr. Hughes, having arrived in Palestine at the time of the visit of the German Emperor and Empress, to give informa-

tion to the Press, it is necessary that he should be given every help and facility within the laws and regulations.

Chief Aide-de-Camp and Marshal to
His Majesty, and Host to the
German Emperor and Empress,
SHAKIR PASHA.

Beneath the signature there is something that I was assured was the Pasha's seal, though it looks like a dirty thumb-mark. And so it was that at last we were enabled to travel unmolested—though it was only by our chartering a special train from Jaffa to Jerusalem that we arrived in time to see William make his celebrated entrance into the holy city.

The Kaiser's Eastern "offensive" in 1898 did not end in Jerusalem, as he journeyed to other places, notably Jaffa and Damascus. For some reason or other he seemed to take a great interest in Jaffa; indeed, it was rumoured that he meant to establish a naval base there, and I wish he had done so, as landing there is often difficult and sometimes impossible. He had as good a reception in Jaffa as Jaffa could give, including, I remember, an illumination. In those days, twenty years ago, the town had neither electric light nor gas, and so the inhabitants had to do what they could with tallow candles fixed—more or less fixed—in lanterns. The weather was hot, the candles

bent over, dirty molten tallow accumulated in the bottom of the lanterns, and, as they were rickety, they now and then upset with what I regarded as the most satisfactory results on the people below. One incident of that hot night pleased me at the time and gives me more pleasure now that I look back on it. A fat German was standing in the doorway of his hotel, preening himself, and evidently feeling that all was well with the world. He had seen his Emperor, he was convinced that "Deutschland" was "über alles," and it was quite evident that greatly daring he had dined. There he stood wearing a white waistcoat that illustrated the German policy of expansion, and all the time over his unconscious head a lantern with a useful accumulation of liquid unclean tallow swayed to and fro. At length that which I expected and longed for happened. Over went the lantern, down came the mess all over his waistcoat, making it more filthy than even a prolonged course of the uncleanest German table-manners could have done. May I be forgiven if I say it may be that grease came in on the right side on that occasion, and made an effective offensive on the German front? As I have already hinted, I do not understand German, but when the gentleman said something, and he said a great deal, about it, even I could perceive that he was not pleased.

Jaffa was in those days noted for having more beggars to the square yard than any other place in the world, and I remember that the wise Governor issued a proclamation to the effect that if all the beggars would come to the courtyard of his house he would distribute money enough to last them three or four days; and he explained that this would be done so as to avoid the scandal of begging while the Kaiser and his friends were in the town. The beggars were there to a man on the appointed day, very punctually, and the good Governor romped them all off to prison, keeping them locked up until the Kaiser had left. It was a monstrous interference with the liberty of the subject, and in this country it would have led to many heated questions in the House of Commons. At the same time, as the thing had to be done, I was glad it was done while I was there, since it saved a considerable amount of trouble. Eventually the Kaiser and his retinue moved off and went aboard the *Hohenzollern* again, to travel to Beyrout and from there to Damascus. That old city, said by some to be the oldest city in the world, was to me a welcome contrast to many other places in that part of the world. The others struck me as dirty, dusty and evil-smelling, but in Damascus water is plentiful. The rivers of Damascus still flow through the city, and the result is that orchards

and trees abound. There is a hill outside from which one may observe the sun setting over the city on as fair a scene as one can want to see. The domes and minarets catch the fading rays, and the immemorial call to prayer may be heard going up—pierced, I am bound to add, by shrieks from locomotives made in Philadelphia, U.S.A. One night when the Kaiser and his staff had ridden out to enjoy this experience they came back again in the dark, for there is hardly any twilight out there. The Turks had resolved to give the Kaiser a surprise welcome, and so dozens of rockets were suddenly sent up almost under the horses' noses. The result was entertaining, as most of the horses reared and pranced furiously, and the huge officers clutched their chargers round the neck, using strong language. Mr. Gladstone once said that strong language differs from violent or vehement language in that it may be nicely adjusted to the circumstances of the case, and very likely that was so on the occasion in question. But the Kaiser's horse ambled along steadily—it was an English horse, and was said to have been trained appropriately enough, in and for a circus. While in Damascus the Kaiser made a speech that attracted notice there, and is even more interesting to-day. At the Government House there he claimed that the Turk was his old and faithful ally, and

added that he hoped all the Mussulmans in the world would look up to him as their natural protector. Sixteen years later, when he began his world-war, he found thousands of Mussulmans, faithful British subjects, against him in the field.

It was while in Damascus that we heard rumours of what was called the Fashoda incident, and it was whispered that there might be war between Great Britain and France. Indeed, the British correspondents were told that they might have to avoid Marseilles in returning home, and travel some other way. As things turned out, Lord Kitchener, as great a diplomatist as he was a soldier, saved the situation. But the possibility was enough for the Kaiser; he cut short his tour and hurried home. No doubt he felt that if this country and France were to go to war he must be at home, praying for both sides, encouraging both sides, and seeing what he could pick up in the scramble. So, as I have said, the tour was cut short, and the Kaiser did not do what many have suggested and hoped he would do—go to Jericho and stop there. He had been giving away decorations, as is his wont, but many hoping for such rewards had not been satisfied, and when they saw that William was off in a hurry they became desperate. Some of them ran after the carriage of the official in charge of that part of the proceedings,

as if asking, "What have we done that you should forget us?" We from England could not understand such doings, coming as we did from a land in which titles and rewards are never asked for, and always reach their recipients as a matter for surprise to be accepted reluctantly.

At last the Imperial Showman boarded his yacht again at Beyrout and was off, to the infinite relief of those responsible for his safety —and of every one else. The last I saw of him on that trip was as he stood on the bridge of the yacht, with folded arms, carefully counting the feeble salutes from the Turkish guns, and it was said that if there had been one gun short he would have had a war about it. It may be thought that in writing about the Kaiser some years after he brought war into the world and all our woe, my views of the past are tinged by the events of the present. Let me therefore say that in 1898, and during the Palestine tour, I described him as being chiefly notable for restlessness, fussiness, a Barnumesque passion for the limelight and an absence of the sense of humour so complete as to be hardly consistent with entire sanity. The same traits and characteristics can be seen in him to-day, but there is this difference—that which was then amusing and even helpful from the point of view of a special correspondent has since become appallingly tragic and dangerous to the whole world.

I have seen the Kaiser only once since he sailed away from Beyrout in 1898, and that was when he was present at the unveiling of the Queen Victoria memorial in front of Buckingham Palace. It was one of the very few occasions on which I have appeared in public out of doors wearing a sword. It was not much of a weapon, but had I been able to catch him unawares I might have got it through him, and that, surely, would have been a good deed in a naughty world. It was on that visit that the Kaiser stayed at Buckingham Palace accompanied by one of his chief spies, both eating our salt. And it is said that he took word home to his eldest son as to exactly where the spoons are kept in Buckingham Palace—for Little Willie's future guidance.

Perhaps I may take leave of this part of my recollections by mentioning an incident that happened quite recently, showing that some of the humorous and incorrect rumours about the Kaiser's doings in Syria were not concocted or spread by French or other journalists. Not long ago I gave an address—really an informal talk—to a number of wounded officers in a hospital, and some of the incidents I have here related were made the basis of what I had to say. I was honoured by having a member of the Royal Family among my hearers. When I had finished, the young Prince congratu-

lated me in a very pleasant manner, and then added, "But why did you leave out the best tale of all?" I asked him to explain, and he then assured me that he had been told by some one who vowed he knew that the Kaiser had throughout his progress in Palestine insisted on being followed by sixty German pastors, all elderly men, all arrayed in evening or dinner dress, and all riding on mules. I assured the Prince that I had not seen that part of the show, nor had I heard of it before. I did not add, as I might have done truthfully, that I envied the author of that gorgeous fiction the power of imagination that enabled him to concoct it, and also his nerve in having the assurance to palm it off on a Royal Highness.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE GREAT REPUBLIC

IN another chapter I have explained what a lasting source of regret it is to me that I have never been able to visit the United States of America. This is written at a time when the sons of that great nation are coming over in hundreds of thousands to help in rescuing Europe and civilisation from a great peril, and thus not for the first time in history the new world is redressing the balance of the old. It is natural enough that at such a time a fresh or added interest should be aroused here in America, in her methods, her literature and in the characteristics of her people. But it has not needed the shock of war, and the great alliance resulting from that shock, to arouse such an interest in me. There used to be a phrase common in this country, though it is seldom heard to-day in its original derogatory sense—the phrase, "Americanising our institutions"—and I always resented it when used in that sense. Of course I do not say that every custom, or even every specimen of phrase-

ology that is quite admirable over there, would be of advantage here. But to suggest that by Americanising our institutions we are necessarily impairing them is nonsense, for each nation may well learn from the other. There are old-fashioned people who lament over the spread of what is called American "slang," but there is much ignorance displayed as to the meaning of the word "slang" in all countries. Many, if not most, specimens of this sort of thing consist in a shortened way of saying things, and after all such helpful abbreviations are not confined to America. Here at home when a man uses the phrase a "taxi-cab" he is cutting down the original "taxi-meter cabriolet" to a more convenient form, and surely such a vivid term as the "movies," which we have adopted from America, is better than the impossible phrase a "cinematographical exhibition."

Again, when people say that American humour is crude or vulgar they are taking a miserably restricted or partial view of the subject. There is vulgar humour in America—and so there is here and everywhere else. But, so far as my own taste is concerned, I doubt whether genuine and delicate wit and humour—qualities not always found together—as well as true scholarship, can be enjoyed more abundantly elsewhere than in the works of Oliver Wendell Holmes. All through those writings we have quaint

turns of thought expressed in terms of unfailing felicity worthy of Charles Lamb himself. I have no intention, however, in a book of this sort, of attempting a review of American literature. Lowell I have long loved, not only for the manner in which he wrote, but even more for the things he said. Charles Dudley Warner's little book on his summer in a garden I have always regarded as a proof that articles written for a daily newspaper may form a classic. Twice in one week I was asked to join Mark Twain at dinner in London, but I was away in the north of England fighting an election. I remember feeling tempted to abandon the election in order to meet that great humorist—who was so much more than a humorist. As things turned out, I might just as well have done so, for in the end I lost the election, and I missed Mark Twain. Again, I have always been much attracted and moved by the mixture of true humour and pathos to be found in the pages of Bret Harte.

I think I can trace the origin of my liking for America and her people to a day more than fifty-three years ago, only a few days before my seventh birthday, when my father read from the paper a description of how Abraham Lincoln had been killed. As I have said, I was a very small boy, and more than half a century has passed since that day, but I distinctly remember

the small sitting-room in my father's house at Bramley, near Leeds in Yorkshire, where the news was made known, nor have I forgotten his emotion as he added, "The world has lost its greatest man." It has been my lot to meet and to listen to not a few really great men, and to know some of them, and of course I have read of many others, but, so far as the qualities which go to make up worthy greatness are concerned, I doubt if among moderns there are any who surpass Abraham Lincoln.

One advantage of frequenting the Lobby of the House of Commons, whether as a member or as one who can go there regularly in some other capacity, is the fact that you meet there all sorts of visitors to London—from Li Hung Chang, whom I saw in that place years ago, to the Russian lady I saw there on the day before this was written, dressed in an officer's khaki uniform, and wearing her medals, none daring to make her afraid. And in that centre I have also met many Americans, naturally enough differing in gifts and graces and in merit. Before I had met many, and before preconceived ideas had been tempered by experience, I expected to find people from the great Republic full of boastfulness and swagger, just as people here imagined when they heard that American troops were about to pass through this country they would come galloping and whooping along,

drawing "guns" from hip-pockets in the style made familiar by the "movies." By this time we have all become accustomed to what at first astonished us—the quiet gravity, in some cases almost the solemnity, of those troops. And I have found in the American visitors to the House but little of the brag and swagger we used to think inseparable from citizens of the United States. Of course I am not pretending they are all perfect. There is the well-known incident of the American who, when on the Terrace with John Burns, referred disparagingly to the river Thames as a trickling rivulet, or something of the sort, and enlarged on the size of the Mississippi. With a superb gesture John, pointing to the river, replied, "That river, sir, is liquid history." The American seemed abashed, though a difference of opinion exists to this day as to whether he was mainly impressed by the rebuke, or by the evident readiness of Mr. Burns to throw him into the river.

Of course we meet now and then with an American who does not treat our little country with proper respect, but I maintain that when you meet with an educated American gentleman, one who has "studied men, their manners and their ways," you will find him singularly tolerant and broad-minded, not quite free from a kindly cynicism, but also not bumptious and not easily surprised by anything. I well re-

member having a talk with an American who was over here some years ago to study our Post Office methods. He was at that time the Postmaster of New York, and I fully expected to hear some blighting references to our old-fashioned style of doing things, and then to be stunned by being told of the very latest methods of "hustle." I found a keen, quiet, observant man, who claimed that in some respects his department was ahead of ours, but he really astounded me by admitting that in a larger number of cases we were ahead of New York. It was enough to unman me.

Again, many people in this country are under the illusion that all our visitors from the United States come from New York, Chicago or some other high-pressure centre of that sort. That is quite a mistake, for there are vast regions in America given over to the simple—the very simple—life, regions of the most pronounced rusticity. One has only to read the matchless tales of O. Henry to discover that Americans are not necessarily sons of New York or Chicago any more than Frenchmen are all Parisians and loose-living dancing masters. I wonder if the reader will allow me to quote something which I wrote on this topic only a year or two before the war. This is what I said after having had the advantage of meeting quite a number of visitors from the West: "It is customary to

describe the citizens of the great Republic, whom we compendiously lump together as 'Yankees,' as 'cute' or 'spry.' They are supposed to be endowed with supernatural shrewdness, and are looked upon as diabolically smart. Yet I doubt if they are as shrewd as many a Yorkshireman who, as he sells you a horse (selling you in more than one sense), appears to be half asleep and potters about with a pathetic air of rustic simplicity. The fact is that the confidence-trick gentlemen of London would be quite unable to continue their interesting and enterprising careers if it were not for the amazing and almost incredible gullibility of welcome visitors from the United States. And again it is in that favoured part of the world that freak theologians, from Brigham Young to Dr. Dowie, have enjoyed their greatest triumphs. It is there that the safe-cure for everything and the universal pill are sold by the truck-load, and it is among those people, regarded by some as shrewd and smart, that all sorts of fakes and swindles in connection with what is known as the 'occult' flourish and abound. I forget who coined the useful phrase 'erotic and tommyrotic,' but it is certain that the tommyrotic finds a congenial soil and climate across the Atlantic and brings forth sixty or a hundred fold." There is no doubt that some of our cousins do, or in the past did, let them-

selves be deceived and swindled over here, but I am told by many who have had dealings with American soldiers recently that while they are slow in method, and in a sense simple, they are no fools. If in a shop they see what they want, and the price appears to be reasonable, the bargain is concluded at once without haggling. If there is any attempt to victimise them there is "nothing doing."

Another feature in American life which has made the nation attractive to me is the manner in which they cultivate the art of after-dinner speaking. I have said elsewhere that here this art is not given a chance, as such speaking in this country is often left to men because they are generous subscribers to charitable funds, even though they may be masters only of the hum-and-haw, or the hee-haw, style. That is not so in America, where leading men of the status of Choate and Chauncey Depew have not disdained to polish up carefully their gems of after-dinner oratory. I have heard accounts of entertainments of this sort at Press dinners in New York which make one think of Milton's reference to the "perpetual feast of nectared sweets where no crude surfeit reigns." It is said that on such occasions the jokes are often merely suggested, and instantly seen and appreciated. There is no need to elaborate them, still less is a speaker ever subjected to that

most trying of ordeals—an explanation of his joke with a conscientious indication as to where the laugh should come in. The New York Press men must form an ideal audience for an after-dinner speaker who is equal to the occasion, though I can imagine that they may seem to be not joyous but grievous to the man who is not. Nothing is more distressing to a man of feeling than the spectacle of an honest orator assuring an audience that he is endowed with a sense of humour in spite of the evidence to the contrary supplied by the mere fact that he is doing so.

Some years ago, before I was a member of Parliament, I was entertained at a dinner (not the dinner in 1906 at the Trocadero, but another), when my health was proposed by a distinguished man who has since been in a Government, and who still sits on one of the front benches. Some one had told him that I was a humorist, and many had told him at different times that he was not. This had roused him, and he declared in a vehement and almost defiant manner that he really was a humorist. He is certainly a scholar, and in support of his contention he quoted Aristophanes freely, backed up by a display of masterly logic. There was no flaw in the argument, yet his hearers were unconvinced as to his being a humorist, unless he was one of the unconscious type. As I have said,

such a display is distressing, and I understand that those who gather at New York Press dinners are spared inflictions of that sort. Let me add that I once saw the report of a joke made by Mr. Choate, which was no doubt original in the sense that it occurred to himself at the time. He was speaking at a men's dinner when the ladies were looking down from a gallery, and he alluded to the diners as being "a little lower than the angels." The little conceit was well received, and I certainly have nothing to say against it, since quite ten years earlier I had said of the members of the Parliamentary Press in the House of Commons—"They are like the good Christian in this world, seeing that they are in the House but not of it. They look down on the proceedings below from a more elevated plane, and from a serener atmosphere. And as their gallery is just below the ladies' gallery they can claim to be only a little lower than the angels." To have anticipated Mr. Choate in any way may well be a source of legitimate pride.

I have sometimes thought that it would be a telling and impressive experience if a man could visit and explore some of the great iron and steel centres in America where there is the constant roar of modern machinery, smoke and din, hustle and bustle—and then within not many hours could find himself pottering

about Athens or exploring old temples in Egypt. We know that the greatest source of effect is contrast. And who will presume to say confidently that before very long an improved and extended air-service will not have made such a striking experience possible ?

There is one article of American origin which I possess and which I treasure, though it is of no great intrinsic value. It is what is called a red cent, that is to say, a copper and not a nickel cent piece, and though of small monetary value it is quite a beautiful coin, and is dated 1905. Between that year and 1910 it was given to me by the late Major Willie Redmond. He had been over to America on one of his expeditions, and it was then customary for some politicians in this country to accuse the Irish Nationalists of trying to bribe the English voters with what were called "dirty dollars." When Willie Redmond turned up in the Lobby one day I asked him if he had any dirty dollars to spare in order to bribe me. He replied, "I won't try to bribe you, but I think your faithfulness to the cause should receive a fitting reward," and he handed over this cent. I have carried it ever since, not as a mascot, for I regard all belief in mascots, charms and so forth as grovelling superstition, but as a little memento of a gallant and cheery Irish gentleman.

CHAPTER XXVII

SOME RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

IN recent years there has been a tendency to pay regard to what are called coincidences, or to mysterious combinations of affairs. Let me say at once that all through my life, and at present no less than in the past, I have had an absolute disbelief in, and possibly an ignorant contempt for, anything of that nature. All the talk about mascots, luck, second-sight or anything of the sort—and such talk is becoming increasingly common—does not attract me in the least. I am afraid that in times of war there is a disposition to turn to what may be called occultism and all that is included in the term. From anything of that sort I shrink instinctively. I know well enough that there are those who ask how one accounts for what are called "coincidences," and who challenge you to say how you can explain this, that or the other event, and of course the only answer that can be given is the answer I have always given—"I don't know."

What is a coincidence? It has been well defined as a notable occurrence of events in circumstances having no apparent casual connection. And whenever I have tried to enforce that truth, or to enlarge on it, by quoting from Professor De Morgan, who wrote as an authority on the "Theory of Probabilities," I have aroused protest and wrath from some credulous people. De Morgan has said, in the most trying manner, "A man may state, 'It is very improbable that I should be robbed twice in one day; I have been robbed once, and therefore most likely shall not be robbed again.'" Here is a fallacy; it is very unlikely that two robberies should take place in the same day; but when the first has taken place the probability of two becomes the same as the probability of the remaining one. That is no doubt so, but the average man will never be persuaded that if he is robbed twice in one day (always supposing that the first attention has left something to be taken later) this circumstance is not an event outside the normal ordering of the universe.

Let me mention what may fairly be called, perhaps ignorantly, but still in the ordinary acceptation of the term, a curious coincidence within my own experience. One Sunday night I was spoken to on the telephone by Sir Gordon Hewart, who asked me to come over to his house

for a chat, and I told him I would be there in less than an hour. He then quite casually took a volume out of his bookshelf in order to read while he was awaiting my arrival. He happened, without any deliberate choice, or choice of any sort—having taken the first book that his hand touched—to take down one of the volumes of John Wesley's *Journal*, and he let that volume open where it would. On the page before him he, the member for Leicester, read these words: "24th March 1774.—In the evening I preached at Leicester. Here likewise the people walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Naturally enough the learned member for Leicester enjoyed this tribute to his constituency, and as he was idly looking on through the same *Journal*, and before he had turned over another page, he came across this entry: "4th April 1774.—In the evening I preached at poor, dull, dead Stockport, not without hopes that God would raise the dead." So here we had a member for Leicester who was awaiting a visit from a member for Stockport finding quite accidentally a favourable allusion to his own constituency and an unfavourable one to mine in Wesley's *Journal* during a casual glance at a book taken at random from his shelves. Some people would see in that a significant coincidence, but I do not. There is nothing more significant in it than in

one man walking down one side of the street while another walks down the other. Any man, not a member, might have read that allusion to Leicester when another man with no connection with Stockport was coming to see him. But scores of people will say, "There must be something in it." Of course I admit at once that there *is* something in it—something, that is, interesting and amusing—but nothing significant—it was an accident, or a coincidence, in the sense that it was an occurrence of events or circumstances having no connection.

Let me relate another experience in which some people might be tempted to discover mysterious connections. Several years ago Mr. W. T. Stead published a paper containing the names of men and women who were willing, after further explanations, to marry each other. Mr. Stead did not undertake to make the final arrangements, but he allowed men and women to describe themselves, and then they could, if they chose, suit themselves. One of his lists of those who were willing to try came into my hands, and I wrote an article on it, after examining what the prospective people had to say. The list before me, I remember, contained a number of long and very handsome tributes paid by ladies and gentlemen to themselves, but there were two self-descriptions that were

remarkable for their brief simplicity. All that one man said of himself was that he was "fond of animals," and all that a woman said was that she was "domesticated." Naturally enough I knew nothing of these two—their names were not given, for no names were mentioned in the list, but in my article I suggested that these two were obviously made for each other. About seven years later I was lecturing in the west of England—I think at Bristol—and after the lecture some man wanted to speak to me—a common experience. He took from his pocket this article that I had long forgotten, and asked me if I had written it. I had no recollection of the article itself, but I recognised it as one of the long series, so I said that I had no doubt it was from my pen. "Well," said the man, "I took your advice"—and I looked carefully at him, fearing that he might want to curse or even assault me. Then I said tentatively, "I hope the experiment was a success," and he answered heartily, "Rather." Then turning to a lady who was standing in the background, he called her up. She was the lady who was "domesticated"; he was the man who was "fond of animals." The two had been brought together, originally by Mr. W. T. Stead, and later on by my careless and passing suggestion, and they have lived happily ever after.

Having mentioned the name of that remarkable man, Mr. W. T. Stead, I may add two tales about him. On one occasion when some journalistic deputation came over from the Continent I met him and some visitors at luncheon in the charming grounds of Sir Evan Spicer at Dulwich, and I found myself with four or five guests at a little table, one of them being Mr. Stead and another a German lady who was interested in women's suffrage. She could talk English slowly and imperfectly, and she could understand it when it was spoken slowly to her. But she could not quite catch up to Mr. Stead, who was enlarging with the utmost gusto on his theory that women would never gain equal rights with men until they were exposed to equal risks. He went on to say that if women were to have equal rights they must be equally liable to be hanged when they deserved hanging. The German lady turned to me and asked, "What does he say?" I replied, "He says women should be hanged," and the lady exclaimed, "Ah, I am sorry—I thought he was a friend." Mr. Stead tried to explain, and failed, but later on he told me I was a scoundrel, as perhaps I was, though after all I had only explained what he had said.

My second story about that great journalist has to do with his last hours on board the

Titanic, when no one can be quite sure about what happened, though all who knew him will for ever be sure that he played a worthy part. It will be remembered that when the news first reached London that the *Titanic* had been injured it was not known that she had been lost. Indeed there was a message to the effect that she was being towed safely into port, and whatever else was in doubt it was known that Mr. Stead was on board. Those who were then directing the *Daily Telegraph* sent out a wireless message to the ship addressed to W. T. Stead, asking him to write his experiences, charging whatever he liked. No one now knows whether he ever received that message, probably he did not, but if he did it would add a pang to the last moments of a dying journalist to receive such an offer when it was too late.

While I am in a reminiscent mood I may recall a couple of tales that were told to me, not long before the time at which I am writing, by Colonel Lockwood. One has to do with a very learned savant in Edinburgh, who enjoyed European fame, and whose wisdom and knowledge were equal to those of Solomon. He was seated in an omnibus in Edinburgh when a man, by no means ostentatiously sober, stumbled in, and remarked with pointed allusion to the great man, "Some people think they know every-

thing." The remark was received in silence, but it was repeated, and then the excited gentleman said to the learned Professor, after repeating his commonplace for the third or fourth time, "That is so, isn't it?" The Professor replied urbanely that he had known people who thought they knew much more than they did know, but he had never met any one who claimed to know everything. Then the disgraceful person retorted, "Ho, that's so, is it? Well, I can tell you something you don't know, and it will interest you. My wife is your washerwoman and I'm wearing one of your shirts," and that certainly added to the stock of the Professor's information.

The second tale for which I am indebted to Colonel Lockwood was heard by him in circumstances that I am not likely to enjoy or experience, for he was dining between two bishops. One bishop said he had met a workman who explained his absence from church by saying, "The first time I went there they threw water in my face, and the second time they tied me up to a woman that I've had to keep ever since." The other bishop remarked grimly, "And the third time he goes they'll throw dirt on him"—as neat a summary of baptism, marriage and burial, from the professional point of view, as can be imagined. The House, and particularly the Lobby, are rich in tales, and

when members are assembled and met together in close consultation, exchanging what the Press describes as "animated conversation," it is not always the outlook, the trend of events or the situation that engages their interest. Sometimes they talk about other things.

Turning from that to quite a different topic, I have often been asked to say what I consider the most constantly repeated misquotation one comes across in the newspapers, and I have little doubt that it is the remark attributed to Bumble that "the law is a hass." That is not as Dickens wrote the remark, for he represented Bumble as saying "the law is a ass, a idiot," but in spite of this the word "hass" is likely to endure in this connection. Another misquotation, so far as spelling is concerned, is contained in the statement that in Westminster Abbey there is a famous epitaph reading, "O rare Ben Jonson." Very likely that is how it should have been set forth, but what is really carved on the stone is "O rare Ben Johnson." Even Mr. E. V. Lucas, a writer generally accurate as he is always charming, gives the incorrect form, that is to say, the form in which the epitaph does not appear, when writing about the Abbey. I say nothing about which is the right way of spelling the poet's name, all I am concerned with is how it is actually spelled on the stone. In the poet's day men were not

very particular as to how they spelled their own names or the names of each other. And in regard to Jonson there is in the records of the Merchant Taylors' Company an entry, dated 16th July 1607, stating that "Sir John Swinnerton, alderman, is intreated to confer with Benjamin Johnson the poet (Poet Laureat to the King)." Again I have a steel engraving reproducing the original of an "Epigramme written by Ben Johnson on His Majesty King James the First's escape from the Powder Plot, 1605." I repeat that I make no attempt to decide whether the poet, as would become a Cockney, fell into the habit of dropping the "h," nor do I say which spelling is the right one—indeed very likely both forms are right. What I do say is that the name is spelled in the Abbey as I have stated above, but those who think they are quoting the epitaph almost invariably mistranscribe it.

Let me add to these gossiping recollections two tales concerning Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. I met him one night at a dinner given by Mr. Thomas Lough, who then lived in Dean's Yard. Among those present, as the newspapers say, were Mr. John Morley, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. T. W. Russell and a number of others. It was a large party, and I remember that Mr. H. W. Massingham and I were the only two there who were

not members of the House. During the evening C.-B. told many tales, and one was to this effect. When he entered the House in 1868 he was young and inexperienced, and he often talked to Mr. William White, who was then the chief door-keeper. White was a very interesting man who used to write an admirable Parliamentary sketch for the *Illustrated Times* every week. One night when C.-B. was talking to him at the door a bishop came up and was about to pass in presumably to the Peers' Gallery. Up jumped White, and not only stopped the bishop, but almost chased him away, so that the prelate retired crestfallen. C.-B. remarked, "Why did you do that? I thought bishops had the right to go to the Peers' Gallery." "So they have," said White, "if they have seats in the House of Lords, but that fellow is only one of the Colonial lot, and they're always trying it on." I well remember how C.-B. trotted down the room imitating the retreat of the discomfited bishop. It happened that C.-B., though a very genial man, did not believe in being on terms of intimate friendship with political opponents, saying that such intimacy made it difficult to criticise men faithfully in the House. When he came into his own in 1906 he used to sit on the Treasury Bench and while chatting to some colleague would indulge in little caustic comments on his leading opponents opposite, some of whom he

had no reason to love. But he almost invariably added, "Well, at any rate there's one decent fellow among them—Walter Long's a decent fellow," and that is a verdict with which all will agree.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LIKES AND DISLIKES

ANY one who writes a book similar in aim and scope to this, however skilfully it may be done, must of necessity say much about himself, and expose himself to the charge of egotism. In spite of having erred in that direction, I propose here at the end to make a few remarks as to my habits and characteristics, which may be more interesting to me than to others. To begin with, I may say that I play no games, except a very occasional game of bowls. I have never played a game of cards, and am seriously and honestly not quite sure of the name of some cards. When at any entertainment where a conjurer or performer asks a member of the audience to take a card I always abstain, as I might very probably spoil his display by giving a wrong name to it. The fact is that in my childhood I was taught that cards were wicked, a view I do not now share, and later on I did not feel inclined to take the trouble to learn. If by mere volition I could become instantly a good whist or bridge player,

I would certainly do so. As to chess I do not even know the moves, nor have I ever played a game of billiards. Let me also confess with shame and confusion of face that I do not and never did play golf, if the word "play" is appropriate in regard to such a solemnity.

It happens, however, that I have seen much golf played, some of it by great masters. Thus on one occasion I followed James Braid round at Walton Heath, studied his methods, and then wrote an article in which I said that Braid could easily go round in eighteen if he chose—that is to say, he could hole out in one every time. The only reason he does not is that he has no wish to discourage others, and also he is anxious to avoid monotony. A friend who showed this article to James Braid on the following day told me that when he had read it carefully Braid remarked, "This man writes very well."

Of course I played cricket and football—Rugby—when a schoolboy, as we all did, but after those early years I have taken no part in athletics or sport of any kind. For instance, I have never fired off a gun with the intention of killing anything—or, as I hope I need hardly add, of killing anybody. On one occasion a gentleman who had bought a beautiful Winchester rifle, then a new invention, induced me to have a shot at a target in his grounds, and I, obeying his instructions, not only hit the target

but scored one of the best bull's-eyes he said he had ever seen. It was an absolute fluke, and I was wise enough not to make a second attempt. Though not taking part in games, I have always enjoyed watching them being played by others, particularly good cricket, on a fine day and in pleasant surroundings. By "good cricket" I do not mean an excessively scientific game in which nothing happens, but a game in which risks are taken and runs made—and, of course, now and then wickets go down.

In regard to indoor occupations, I prefer reading, and talk, to anything else. By "talk" I do not mean one man haranguing a circle with deadly persistence, for I like a group of men each of whom is ready to put in a word at the right point, who are quick at the uptake, and who can listen. We all know men who never really listen, and who, when they occasionally cease from talking, are obviously preparing their next remark, which has nothing to do with anything said by others.

As to reading, I can distinctly remember the first books that gave me pleasure when a small boy—one was *The Coral Island*, another *The Gorilla Hunters*, and a third *Fighting the Flames*. Quite fifty years have passed since I saw those books, and I am trusting to my memory when I say that their author was named Ballantyne. Whoever he was, he gave me delight at the

time, and he imparted a love for books and reading that has lasted ever since. It was my father who introduced me to De Quincey's works—a great introduction, too. I was much pleased to notice that in his recently published *Addresses* Mr. Asquith enlarges on the fact that people do well to remember that De Quincey wrote much besides the *Opium Eater*. Moreover, quite apart from the learning and information to be found in his essays, his style is worth studying—a style that varies from the great and superb to the most rollicking slang. Among novelists I place Thackeray as easily first, but let me add at once that I strongly resent the notion that because a man prefers Thackeray beyond all others he ought not to enjoy Dickens also. Indeed, I regard Micawber as almost equal to Falstaff as a creation.

But while I enjoy and revel in novels my favourite form of reading is the essay, when it is of the best. Take Charles Lamb, for instance, and you will find that quite apart from the quaint and delicate humour of his notions there is an absolute delight to be found in his phraseology—a style that no one can imitate with success. In his roast pig essay, when he writes of the "tender suckling," he asks: "Wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood?" If he had never

written any other sentence, that one should establish his claim as a master of style. Again, I have read repeatedly the essays of John Morley, if I may mention that noble lord by the name by which he will always be known in the republic of letters. Let me give two brief specimens of his style that have always stuck in my memory. In referring to our older universities he speaks of "the indefinable charm that haunts the grey and venerable quadrangles of Oxford and Cambridge . . . the stately halls, the silent and venerable libraries, the solemn chapels, the studious old-world gardens, . . . and all those elevated memorials and sanctifying associations of scholars and poets, of saints and sages, that march in glorious procession through the ages, and make of Oxford and Cambridge a dream of music for the inward ear and of delight for the contemplative eye." Those are the words of one who is called a Radical, and it is commonly supposed that no Radical can have any regard for the ennobling influence of tradition! Here is another specimen of Morley at his best when analysing the methods of Macaulay: "He seeks Truth not as she should be sought, devoutly, tentatively, and with the air of one touching the hem of a sacred garment, but clutching her by the hair of the head, and dragging her after him in a kind of boisterous triumph—a prisoner of war and not a goddess."

Here we have vigorous expression, and what does not always go with that, keen insight. I may add, however, that I do not agree with the modern readiness to decry Macaulay, nor does John Morley either. Indeed, I have sometimes wished that some of Macaulay's critics could be confronted by the man whom they disparage, so that we might see who had the best of the bout.

There are two other books of entirely a different type from those mentioned—I mean Boswell's *Johnson* and Pepys's *Diary*—that I have read again and again, and intend to keep on reading. I believe that I have done far more reading than some men who have read many more books, the explanation being that there are some books which I have read repeatedly, and of which I never tire. Boswell is one of them, and I quite agree with a remark I heard at the Johnson Club not long ago, that one merit in Boswell is that you do not remember what you have read, and can always turn to the book again with fresh interest. The same thing can be said of Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Macaulay*, a work which I regard as second only to Boswell in that class of literature. Pepys is, as every one knows, unique. It is, I believe, the only book in the world that was written not only not for publication, but with a conviction and certainty on the part of the

author that no one but himself would ever be able to decipher it. That accounts for it being such an unequalled example of self-revelation, and also such a valuable record of the history of those days by one who was a keen observer, and was not afraid to tell us what he saw, for the very reason that he did not know he was telling the facts to any one.

Before leaving the topic of books let me say I have always been haunted by the suspicion that it is quite possible some books as good as anything known to the world have been written and have never been published. It is all very well for the poet to say we needs must love the highest when we see it, but it is notorious that some books that the world has welcomed, and which are still treasured, were almost lost at the outset, being again and again rejected, and were published only when the author was on the verge of abandoning the struggle in despair. Is it not possible that in some cases the struggle has been abandoned, and that there are great written but unprinted books sharing the dark obscurity of Gray's gems of purest ray serene? One of the most interesting tales in literature is that told by Lady Richmond Ritchie, the gifted daughter of Thackeray, in which she relates how when a little girl she noticed her father's anxiety and depression because when the first two

monthly instalments of *Vanity Fair* had appeared the publishers thought it must be dropped. That famous novel survived only by an accident. And if it had failed, seeing that it was his first attempt at a great work, who knows but that Thackeray would have returned to the writing of less ambitious and only fugitive sketches, and never done anything worthy of his genius ?

Having mentioned my fondness for talk and reading, I may add that I have always been most deeply moved by music, though I cannot play on any instrument, nor can I "read" a note. I have sometimes thought that a man may lose some of the pleasurable or emotional effect of music by having too critical a knowledge of the art, since instead of giving himself up to the pleasure it imparts he will be watching and even hunting for some little lapse. On one occasion I was deeply moved by a musical effect that possibly a severe critic would dismiss as mere trickery. It was when King Edward VII. was lying in state in Westminster Hall, the Lords being drawn up on one side, the Commons on the other, the Lord Chancellor facing the Speaker, and the maces of the two assemblies laid opposite to each other. There was a splendid choir formed of picked voices from Westminster, St. Paul's and the Chapel Royal, supported by some of the most famous military

bands, and at one part of the service was sung Dr. Watts' hymn, "Our God, our help in ages past"—a hymn founded on what Macaulay has described as "that lofty and melancholy psalm in which the fragility of human life is contrasted with the immutability of Him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night." The singing and the instruments filled the hall with a great volume of sound, and then when the verse beginning "Time like an ever-rolling stream" was reached all the instruments ceased, and so did the deeper voices, as that particular verse was sung by the boys alone. The effect was almost indescribable, and perhaps it was not entirely the result of the sudden contrast, but that it owed something to the occasion and the surroundings. There, in perhaps the most historic building in the Kingdom, in a hall first built in the days of William Rufus and still containing some of the work of those days, under a glorious roof, added later it is true, but a roof beneath which memorable events in many centuries had taken place,—there lay the body of one of our Kings who had reigned only nine years. He must be a stolid man indeed who, at such a time and in such surroundings, could hear unmoved the fresh great clear voices singing that "Men fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day."

Let me mention another occasion when I found the effect of music to be overwhelming. I had to make a speech or give a lecture to a large audience of more than 3000 in Wales, nearly all of them being men, and a very large number Welsh miners. Just before I spoke these men sang as Welshmen do sing—that is to say magnificently—" Land of my Fathers." There was no instrumental accompaniment, and none was needed. As I have said the effect was overwhelming, and that is no figure of speech so far as I was concerned, as I had to ask the chairman to make some announcements, or to say something for two or three minutes because the music had so wrought on me as to make it impossible to command my voice. I may advise any speaker who is open to the appeal of such music as this to arrange for a little interval between the singing and his remarks. I have heard the same words and tune at a great Welsh service in Westminster Abbey with selected voices and a magnificent instrumental accompaniment, but the result fell far short of that experienced when those Welsh miners in their thousands sang this national hymn in their own language and in their own land.

It is not always easy to explain why certain sights and incidents arouse emotion in nearly every one, but I suppose most men will admit that there is something touching and even

pathetic as well as deeply impressive in watching the launching of a great ship. Some years ago I saw, not the launching of the *Mauretania*, but her departure from the Tyne where she had been built. What really happened was, of course, that a very big vessel went down the river and out to sea—just that and nothing more. But every pit and every school in the neighbourhood closed, and, indeed, work of nearly every sort was suspended, so that half a million people lined the banks of the Tyne to watch the huge ship, escorted by fussy little tugs, go solemnly towards the sea and all its risks. As the procession passed away we lost sight of the tugs, and the afternoon sun caught the funnels and the white upper works of the *Mauretania* towering over everything else—and then I observed that a very large number of ladies were weeping, and some men seemed very near it. I make no pretence of explaining why any one should weep or should be deeply touched by such an incident, and yet we all know that these things happen. But most men are ashamed of showing emotion. There is, of course, no real reason why any man should think it disgraceful to let it be seen that he is touched by a moving incident, and yet I am glad that men of our race keep themselves under control in regard to such matters. It is on record that in the year 1626 the Speaker of that day began to weep in the House because of

something or other, and the whole House burst into sobs. Even that great lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, sobbed aloud in the House, on at least one occasion—both Pitt and Fox wept there, and more than one Lord Chancellor has done so when on the Woolsack. These incidents do not add to my generally good opinion of Parliament and of great Parliamentarians. I prefer a tale I once read about some famous man going to hear a popular preacher who was shedding tears in the pulpit, and the famous man turned to a workman, asking, "What is the fellow blubbering about?" The workman answered, "Well, you'd blubber too, if you were up there and had as little to say for yourself as he has"—a shrewd answer that pleased the inquirer greatly, and showed our ordinary attitude to such displays.

Leaving that topic let me say a final word about myself. I have never been rich in the ordinary meaning of the phrase, but I have been surprisingly rich in friends, only a very few of whom have been mentioned in these pages. Some are what are known as "distinguished men," men who have won for themselves high positions in the public service, and many of whom, though equally good friends and equally gifted, have "lived unseen, unknown," for success of this sort is a lottery. But they have all been sincere and constant in their friendship.

Only once in what is now a long experience have I been saddened and disappointed by what I regard as something really unworthy in human nature in connection with the treatment of myself, and that is a trifle when compared with the many "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness" I have received. That is to say, they are very likely unremembered by those who performed the acts, but not by me. As to mankind in general why should I attempt to express any sweeping judgment either one way or the other? When Dr. Johnson said "Round numbers are always false," no doubt he meant that confident general statements are seldom accurate.

If I were asked to mention the failing I have found most in evidence among men, and especially in the section of the world known best to me, I should say that it is that they are unduly fond of flattery. No doubt sensible men do not welcome, indeed they resent, gross or clumsy flattery, but I believe every man is open to flattery about something—some gift or grace, some accomplishment or characteristic which he has persuaded himself he possesses, and of which he is secretly proud. This is certainly the case with most members of Parliament. Consult almost any one of them about some public question and you will as a rule find him talking about himself before long. Lord Mel-

bourne knew public men and politicians well, and when asked his opinion of them replied that they were "good fellows, very good fellows, but vain, very vain"—not an unkind pronouncement, and one that showed true insight.

Yet as I am about to put aside my pen, having finished what I had to say, I feel inclined to emphasise the first part of Lord Melbourne's verdict rather than the second. In the comparatively short time occupied in writing these pages, many men whom I knew, with some of whom I talked since the book was begun, have gone, and their place will know them no more for ever. On one day I heard of the death of Lord Rhondda, and also of Mr. Allen Baker who seemed to be fit and well when I spoke to him in the House of Commons the night before. On another day I saw the death announced of three men whom I had known well—Sir Samuel Evans, Lord Robson and Sir George Reid, the last of whom sat in the House for the constituency in which I vote. These are all men who fulfilled and enjoyed their careers, but who can fail to think of others whose lives—young, bright, eager lives—have been given with utter disregard of self, for us and for our cause, during the same period in the great war? It is when I think of them that I agree with Melbourne's allusion

to "good fellows, very good fellows." And as I write I remember good Andrew Marvell's lines:

> "But at my back I always hear
> Time's winged chariot hurrying near."

THE END

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